VOLUME VI NUMBER 2

The Mennonite Quarterly Review

APRIL 1932

EDITORIAL

THE ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND MENNONITES OF RUSSIA HAVE been put to a most severe test by the Communist revolution in Russia which was accomplished in October, 1917, and which has resulted in domination of Russia by the Communist party ever since. The period since 1928 to the present time forms the most trying period in the entire history of the Mennonites of Russia. What the final outcome will be is still uncertain. Certain it is that so long as the present regime remains in power, there is no future for the Mennonites; they face destruction.

During the period from 1917 to 1928, however, conditions were somewhat better, and permitted a degree of free activity. In this period constructive attempts were made by the Mennonites to adjust themselves to the new situation and reorganize their economic and cultural life on a new basis. One of the most active younger figures in this movement of reconstruction was Cornelius F. Klassen, who served for several years as the vice-chairman of the All-Russian Mennonite Agricultural Union, and who rendered notable service to his people in a most trying time. Mr. Klassen was permitted to leave Russia in 1929 and emigrate to Canada, where he has since resided in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and taken an active part in the work of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization. On the occasion of the Mennonite World Relief Conference held at Danzig in September, 1930, Mr. Klassen delivered a very interesting address surveying the history of post-revolutionary Mennonitism in Russia. That address is presented in English form in the present issue of the REVIEW.

JOHN UMBLE CONTINUES HIS SKETCHES OF MENNONITE SETTLEments in Ohio, giving a thorough and interesting account of the Allen County settlement near Elida, Ohio. In the previous issue, the Fairfield County background of this settlement was given. Readers should take the two sketches together to get a complete picture of this interesting community. Once more the great difficulties facing the early Mennonite settlements in the Middle West are delineated, and once more it becomes clear that to a large degree the measure of success in meeting these difficulties and in promoting the welfare of the congregations depended on the quality of leadership manifested. Very interesting are the biographical sketches of the two early bishops of the Allen County settlement, Henry Stemen and John M. Brenneman, which the author includes. For years Allen County furnished the leadership for most of the western congregations of Ohio Mennonitism.

THE CONCLUDING INSTALLMENT OF JACOB KREHBIEL'S ACCOUNT of his impressions of American Mennonites in 1841, contains very interesting observations about the practice of church ordinances and the religious instruction of children. Krehbiel's attempt to be absolutely fair is indicated by his inclusion of a letter from John Risser, Richland Co., Ohio, which gives a different picture from the one given by Krehbiel himself. Interesting is Krehbiel's estimate of the leadership in the church in his day, in which he gives men like Peter Eby and Christian Herr of Lancaster, and Benjamin Eby and Jacob Meyer of Ontario first place for breadth of vision and sound leadership.

IN NOTICING THE CORRECTION GIVEN BY I. E. BURKHART IN THE Note on "Menno Simons on the Incarnation," readers should refer to the series of articles on this topic by Professor Burkhart in the April and July, 1930, numbers of the REVIEW.

AMONG THE CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE ARE PROFESSORS BENDER and Umble of Goshen College, who are familiar to the readers of the REVIEW. I. E. Burkhart is Head of the Bible School at Hesston College, Hesston, Kansas. C. F. Klassen, formerly Vice-Chairman of the All-Russian Mennonite Agricultural Union, with headquarters in Moscow, resides since 1929 in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, where he is associated with the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization.

THE MENNONITES OF RUSSIA, 1917-1928

By C. F. Klassen

As is well-known, the Mennonites began to migrate from East Prussia to Russia almost 150 years ago. As foreign colonists they were granted unusual privileges, but in spite of this the beginning in Russia was extraordinarily difficult. It was only after long years of trying and exhausting pioneer work that the colonies gradually began to enjoy a degree of economic prosperity, which once begun, however, continued almost unbroken until 1914.

Already many years before the war an energetic policy of russification of the German Colonies was pursued by certain governmental agencies. The Mennonites were able to resist this policy somewhat more easily than other groups, because of their strong organizations. For instance, we had the Mennonite Agricultural Union which had been founded by one of our greatest leaders, Johann Cornies. We also had our Educational Council, we had our annual conventions of delegates to deal with the matter of forest service, we had our well-grounded fire insurance system, and our model inheritance regulations, and finally, in ecclesiastical matters, our annual conferences. The natural consequence of the russification policy of the state on the one hand, together with the attitude of the dominant Greek Orthodox Church, and the work of our organizations on the other hand, was the development of a degree of "separatism" in the colonies. The problem of separatism, however, is a theme for itself which requires treatment as one of the dominant forces in the history of our colonies in the last twenty years, and which no one can better handle than our own Professor Benjamin Unruh, who possesses an extraordinarily rich archive of material which is waiting exploitation.

When the war broke out the above mentioned russification policy of the government developed into a veritable hate against all German colonists. This political chauvinism soon led to economic measures against the colonies. Among these measures should be mentioned, for instance, the notorious expropriation laws which had basically the same purpose which Stalin is attempting to accomplish to-day with his merciless policy of destruction. Already at that time the thought of emigration was seriously considered. The experiences of the war led to a feeling that one was without a homeland and without a fatherland.

In the spring of 1917 our dilapidated government broke down. In consequence of the revolution in February it seemed as though many favorable opportunities were appearing for us. The Mennonites, as all the German colonies, had been strengthened in their will to solidarity by the hard experiences of war-time. The new era opened up new possibilities and gave new challenges. Within a few months after the February revolution we were able to summon an all-Russian Mennonite convention which dealt with the various economic and cultural problems facing our colonies. This convention appointed an executive committee called the Mennonite Central Office ("Mennozentrum"), and laid down the necessary lines of policy for the work of the immediate future. Under the chairmanship of Professor Unruh the Mennozentrum became very active. It undertook a tremendous program of work.

The revolution in October, 1917, however, shattered all these plans. Lenin gave to Russia the dictatorship of the proletariat. The revolutionary system, however, was not so readily and easily established. In many regions a wild anarchy set in, especially in South Russia. The bands of anarchists were particularly destructive in our Mennonite villages. It was in that awful time that in one night all the male inhabitants of one village were massacred. What our churches had to endure in those days cannot be described here in a few words, but demands extensive treatment in the prospective history to which I referred in the beginning. The anarchy in the south continued until Moscow brought discipline and order. At that time the southern churches sent an investigating committee the so-called "Studien Kommissios" to foreign countries to prepare the way for emigration.

In Moscow at that time, where the newly established order was most stable, there were a number of young Mennonite men, mostly such as had served in the hospital corps in the army, and had remained in Moscow after the war was over. I was among the number. We had been cut off from our home churches by the various fighting fronts which had been established. We had no connection with the south nor with the east, but through devious ways we found out that in the territories which were still in the possession of the Red Forces, mobilization of our young men was about to be carried through. We at once petitioned the Supreme Military Council at Moscow to free our young men from combatant service. At that time the various non-resistant groups in Moscow organized the so-called "United Council of Religious Bodies and Groups," in which we Mennonites had representatives. This

"United Council" was legally recognized and was granted the right by the government to appear before the court as expert counsel in all cases of trial of those who refused military service. The "United Council" in those darkest years of anarchy succeeded by the help of God in preserving thousands of young men from the worst and in saving very many from death by execution. Naturally, the energetic work of the "United Council" soon became very obnoxious to the Bolsheviki, who set up a remarkable five-day trial against the members of the Council and dissolved the Council. The rich archive of the "United Council" was confiscated and has been almost totally lost. This archive, which unmasked the whole phraseology of the Bolsheviki about the "model" freedom of conscience enjoyed by every citizen of the Soviet State, had to be destroyed.

Conditions at home in the colonies varied from place to place. The situation was the worst in the South. Since the various colonies were isolated from each other, each colony had to help itself as best it could. It was not until July, 1920, that our congregations in East Russia and Siberia had the opportunity to summon a conference, the first since the revolution. Among other very important decisions of this conference was the decision to chose two representatives who were to look after the interests of the church in Moscow. These representatives were Peter Froese and the writer. In the beginning of our work in Moscow there were two questions which chiefly occupied our time. Closed churches had to be gotten back again from zealous local officers, and Communist teachers who had driven our own teachers from our schools had to be removed. The question of military service also caused us much work. We were able to accomplish considerable at that time from the government. In most instances all we had to do was to bring pressure upon the central authorities to restrain the radical revolutionary measures of the local provincial authorities.

The militant communism of the first years had led to complete economic bankruptcy, and Lenin had insight enough to issue a summons to retreat in the spring of 1921, and set up the so-called "new economic policy (Nep.)." We at once breathed easier. Our Mennonite people took new courage to work and we planned to create a strong Mennonite economic organization, but it was to be otherwise. A terrible drought destroyed the entire harvest of 1921. There were no reserves on hand, because everything had been surrendered to the government previously. Soon the first signs of the coming famine manifested themselves and all constructive work had to be laid aside.

Meanwhile we had news from the South that attempts were being made to organize, but the long civil war and the complete crop failure, together with the overcrowding in the colonies because of the immigration of those who had lost their property and who had become refugees because of persecution had created an almost indescribably difficult situation. In those days the work of Bro. B. B. Janz in the southern colonies was of exceptional value.

In the early summer of this year we received through roundabout channels a letter from Professor Alvin Miller, the representative of the American Mennonite Relief at Constantinople, in which he informed us that all his attempts to secure a permit to enter Russia had been in vain, and that he therefore asked that we undertake the necessary steps in Moscow to secure his admission. Our endeavors in the Kremlin to accomplish this, however, were in vain at this time. Then we decided to try to get a permit for myself to go to Constantinople and establish the contact there with the Constantinople representatives of A. M. R. (American Mennonite Relief). My lengthy oral discussion with Litvinov who was at that time Vice-Commissar for Foreign Affairs, led to the result that I was given a permit for the journey by the foreign office. In the meantime the so-called "All Russian Relief Committee" was organized. However, after a short period of work it was dissolved by the government and most of its members were put into prison. Time will not permit me to report the very interesting details of those agitated months. So instead of being able to go to Constantinople I myself was put into the prison of the secret police (Cheka). At this time the Soviet Government was already conducting negotiations with the representatives of Hoover which led to an agreement with the A. R. A. (American Relief Administration). Alvin Miller was now also able to come to Moscow. In those days I was released from prison and had the opportunity to help Professor Miller. In addition to the actual work of organizing in Moscow many trips had to be taken into the famine regions, trips which in view of the bad transportation facilities were more than difficult. More could be said about the work of the relief organizations, about the difficult situation in the colonies, about the horrors of famine itself, but those who are interested in these matters will find a rather extensive report of the famine and the relief work in the book, *Feeding the Hungry*, published by the Mennonite Central Committee at Scottdale, Pa., in 1929. Through the relief work thousands of our brethren were rescued from death and starvation. Countless tears were dried. What we experienced in those days cannot be pictured with a few words. It must be

experienced. Many families who had already for considerable time been sustaining themselves only on field mice, crows, carcasses of dead animals and wild plants, etc., suddenly received white bread, milk, sugar, fat and rice. Permit me to mention one case out of the countless experiences of that time. I was on a tour of inspection in the Volga. The American food supplies had just been distributed. In my visits I came to a family with many children. Mother and father had faces and limbs swollen from hunger, the children were emaciated. The mother had already mixed some dough and the oldest girl was trying to make fire in the stove which had not been heated for a long time and therefore smoked quite a bit. At last the fire caught and the mother put the dish with the dough on the stove with considerable ceremony, and put the first biscuits into the pan in which some American lard had been melted. The children all stood around the stove. The mother could not restrain the tears of gratitude which rolled freely down over her cheeks and dropped onto the stove. But the eyes of the children! Those looks I will never forget. I could not contain my feelings any longer and slipped out of the house quietly. In the eyes of the children I read that all the dollars, gilders, and marks which had been given were bearing interest, an interest of which the givers had no conception. The whole relief work of our foreign congregations was a demonstration of love.

The southern colonies, which contain approximately three-fifths of the Mennonites of Russia, belong to the autonomous republic of the Ukraine. For this reason they could not organize an economic union together with the other colonies. Therefore, they organized their own Mennonite Economic Union with its headquarters in the village of Tiege, which were removed in the year 1925 to Charchov, the capital of the Ukraine. The leader and chairman of the Union until its reorganization in the year 1926 was B. B. Janz, whose name is well-known, even in our foreign congregations, on account of his untiring work in the emigration of our brethren from Russia in the years 1923-24-25. I am sorry I have no report about the work of this southern union. Its service in the field of stock-breeding, particularly in the improvement in the quality of the "German Red Cow," was recognized by the state. The butter of the union had an extraordinarily good reputation in Charchov, as well as in the best resorts on the southern coast of the Crimea. All the splendid work of the southern union was hamstrung, however, by its compulsory reorganization in the year 1926, and was altogether destroyed in the following years.

In the year 1922, after the severest part of the famine had been overcome, the eastern colonies tried to again create an economic organization. We prepared a constitution which was submitted to the Central Government in Moscow for examination and approval. Many consultations in the various government offices were necessary and almost five months passed until it was finally approved on May 16, 1923. The poverty in the colonies was great, but the will to work of our Mennonites was greater. The constitution was really quite good and deserves further consideration in the forthcoming history. It had a good foundation for work. On the basis of our constitution we were able to organize the individual settlements by establishing branches of the "All-Russian Mennonite Agricultural Union," (AMLV.) as our organization called itself. As time went on these branches became developed sufficiently to have their own individual constitutions. That was a great work, a constant struggle with the local officials, but finally we had achieved the organization of nineteen branch units with fifty-six sub-branches and a membership of 5,965 family-farm units. In other words we had succeeded in organizing into a coöperative union 80% of all the Mennonite farms in Siberia, on the Volga, in Turkestan, in the Caucasus, and in the Crimea. Thus we included all the Mennonite colonies in Russia except those in the Ukraine. The work of our local organizations concerned itself chiefly with the production of pure seed and with stock-breeding. They produced seed of first, second, and third grades, as well as special seed. The work of our organization was recognized by the government offices as thoroughly useful, and the products of our seed growing associations were certified by the government experimental stations as very good. Quite a number of scientific books give evidence to this fact. Striking results were also achieved in the field of stock breeding. In Siberia it was the "German Red Cow," on the Volga it was the Dutch and Simmental breed, on the Orenburg steppes it was the "German Red Cow." These improvements we carried on under the direction of experienced zoologists. In addition dairying was promoted, particularly the manufacture of cheese. Brick cheese and Dutch cheese were produced in large quantities and placed on the market. Stations for the cleaning of grain and the care of tractors should also be mentioned, but these and other points would lead me too far afield and must be left to the pen of Professor Unruh in his history.

The above-mentioned facts, of course, completely refute the unreasonable charges brought by several foreign newspapers who went so far during the flight of the German farmers out of Russia

as to assert that the German refugees were composed of farmers who out of protest against the political system in Soviet Russia would neither work nor obey the law and therefore fled from Russia. The German farmers in Russia have thoroughly demonstrated that they wanted to work and that even when they had been "legally" robbed of everything they nevertheless began at once to build up again as soon as they were allowed to do so. The astonishing fortitude which particularly our Mennonite farmers demonstrated in economic matters has scarcely yet been properly appreciated, and must be left to the verdict of later history.

A great work was also done by our organization in Moscow in connection with the emigration of our brethren from Russia to Canada. Naturally, we tried to work out a sound basis of realism in this matter. All through the years we dealt openly and frankly with the Soviet government in regard to the emigration and developed the whole movement in altogether legal channels. How we took care of the emigration movement with the government in Moscow, and what was accomplished in this direction by our work cannot be discussed here because of lack of time, but must also be left to Professor Unruh's history.

A unique work in the transportation of our emigrants to Canada and their care there has been accomplished by the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization at Rosthern, Saskatchewan. I believe that this organization would often have given up and broken down in the face of the at times almost unconquerable difficulties, and would not have been able to take care of twenty thousand of our people to the present time, if the chairman, Bishop David Toews, had not devoted himself with a loving heart and with enduring patience and with constantly fresh optimism throughout the entire movement. The conference will hear two very interesting reports in regard to this relief work from Bishop Toews later.

Already in the year 1924 we endeavored to secure from Moscow permission to publish an agricultural periodical, but almost a year passed before we received the permit. The first number of the periodical, *The Practical Farmer* (*Der Praktische Landwirt*) appeared on May 14, 1925. Naturally, we were not permitted to publish anything political or religious. We had a constant struggle with the censors who saw in every non-Bolshevist publication a danger for the publishing monopoly of the Soviet government. The Bolshevist cowards feared every freely spoken and written word which might possibly make a hole in their tissue of lies. By hook and crook we carried the publication of *The Practical Farmer* through to December of 1926, when we had to cease publication.

It would be easier to report about the work of our associations if these associations had been able to work longer and maintain the successes of our work. It was not possible to continue any very successful constructive work beyond the year 1926. In that year the entire economic policy of the Bolsheviki in regard to the peasants underwent a tremendous change. The hoped-for world revolution had not yet come. The Soviet was surrounded by capitalistic states, all of which were working feverishly for their own reconstruction. In order to become more independent of the capitalistic neighbors Stalin considered it necessary to turn the entire attention of the party to heavy industry. Heavy industry was now supported in every possible way at the cost of agriculture. The agricultural taxes became unbearable, both the direct and indirect taxes in the form of "voluntary" subscriptions to government loans. Life became almost impossible.

We had attempted to build up our Mennonite agricultural coöperative, as well as our consumers' coöperatives in such a fashion that they would act as a protection against the disintegrating Bolshevist influence, insofar as it affected our settlements. The attacks of the communists, their unceasing attempts to bolshevize our administrative organizations, required constant defensive struggle. Imported German communists from Germany, Austria, and the border states, most of whom were tough fellows who knew neither Russian conditions nor the Mennonites, were sent to the German colonies from Moscow with orders to strengthen the revolution in the colonies. As soon as these fellows noticed that our organizations had succeeded up to that time in protecting the settlements from a rapid sovietizing, they directed their entire hate against us as leaders of our organizations.

It had been clear to us from the beginning that since the revolution had dissolved all ownership of land, a productive and constructive work in agriculture would only be possible if the right of *usufrucht* of the land would be stabilised. The solution of this problem meant much work, but we achieved considerable success. Our Mennonite farmers were for the most part recognized as intensive farmers who had the right to the use of the maximum amount of land.

This increased the hate of the above mentioned foreign Communists toward us. They did their utmost to undermine our work and create animosity against us in the various government offices. The consequence was that already in 1927 we were able to accomplish scarcely any productive work, but rather had to struggle to maintain even the most elementary possibility of work for our set-

tlements. Naturally this could not last much longer. In the field of foreign politics the Soviet government had brought about very few changes of significance, and so the Communist party began a drive of rapid socialization of agriculture. We realized that the final dissolution of our AMLV was but a few months away. An outstanding Russian economist, of whom we had learned in the course of years to expect the truth, told us confidentially that the party would be compelled to dissolve us on the following grounds:

1. The AMLV had throughout its existence nourished the illusion among the Mennonites that the Mennonites had a right to their own coöperative and to individual development.

2. The AMLV had always been a handicap in the program of sovietizing the Mennonite colonies.

3. From the point of view of the Soviet policy it had been a mistake in every respect for the central government to authorize the establishment of the AMLV, thereby promoting a Mennonite separatism which was intolerable in view of the Bolshevist policy toward nationalities in Russia.

This statement was clear and only confirmed what we had long known. We had long seen through the entire tissue of lies which had been woven around the famous liberal policy of Bolshevism toward nationalities in Russia. We were not to be allowed to have a free economic administration and not a free development of our cultural genius. They wanted to transform us into the same proletarians with neither religion nor nationality, just as they had already done with the numerous racial minorities and are still doing to-day, and now, in order to accomplish their criminal work in our colonies as well, our organization had to be extirpated.

In the late summer of 1928 we were finally dissolved. All that had been accomplished by the years of exertion and sacrifice which our local organizations had made, all the result of the sacrificial labor in which the leaders constantly risked their freedom and very often also their lives, were now destroyed in a short time.

Naturally, we were far away from the ideology of the ruling class, the Bolsheviki, and we always spoke openly in Moscow in whatever concerned the colonies. We wanted to have the possibility of work for our farmers quite independent of the prevailing political system, and since we felt that our endeavors in this direction were in no conflict with the interest of Russian economy in general, we felt fully justified in struggling for the accomplishment of our demands with a good conscience. We attempted with all the means which were at our command to conserve the good which our fathers had handed down to us and to create new values. How

far our attempts were successful under the terrible conditions with which we had to labor must be left to the judgment of impartial historians.

The later developments in our settlement after 1928 will be discussed in detail by Professor Unruh in his report.

In ecclesiastical matters our congregations were permitted relative freedom of activity for several years after the revolution. The law forbade religious instruction for children it is true, and in our schools this instruction had to be given up, but we tried as much as possible to improve our religious services for children on Sundays and to develop capable leaders for this work. In January 1925, after long years, a General Mennonite Conference was able to meet again. Those were great days in Moscow, days which we will never forget. Delegates of our congregations had gathered from all Russia and we were permitted to work undisturbed for several days. We were glad enough for this opportunity. It was the first general conference after the revolution, and unfortunately was the last. In the following year the situation of our teachers and preachers became constantly worse. The teachers were required not only to give up all religious instruction in the school, but also to give direct anti-religious instruction. Many teachers voluntarily gave up their schools, others were expelled by the authorities and were without jobs and without food, others attempted to hold out at their posts for the sake of the children, even under the most difficult circumstances. We can scarcely imagine even a small part of the nerve-wracking struggles which our teachers had to go through with the school officials, nor can we imagine the perhaps still more trying inner struggles in which they stood alone without the support of anyone, and in spite of an inner repugnance against the entire educational policy of the government nevertheless remained at their posts in order to protect the children from the godless influence of their successors. If we had realized what they were going through there would have been much more prayer in their behalf.

The General Conference of 1925 decided to publish a religious monthly periodical. The periodical was assigned to the Commission for Church Matters ("Kommission fur Kirchliche Angelegenheiten," KFK). The KFK had represented all the Mennonite communities in particularly ecclesiastical matters since 1924. The officers consisted of three members with headquarters in the South. I have no time to go into detail in regard to the often unconquerable difficulties which the officials of the Central Government as well as the local officials created for these brethren in their

work. This will need to be treated at length in the above mentioned history. The organ of the General Conference, *Unser Blatt* was published in spite of great difficulty and frequent delays due to the censors until June, 1928, and was then suppressed. Somewhat earlier the itinerant evangelism had been forbidden, and the preachers had been limited to their own congregations. The right to vote was taken from the preachers and they were burdened with various taxes which in most cases led to complete confiscation of property. If they could not pay the inhuman taxes they were thrown into prison. The Bolsheviki naturally do not want to have this procedure called a persecution of Christians, but they simply reckoned the preachers as "kulaks," and this class was to be destroyed. What it means to a preacher to attempt to serve his congregation under such pressure can only be understood by one who has personally experienced it, and in spite of everything we have many, many preachers who are continuing faithfully in service, in spite of the fact that they stand in daily danger of suffering the fate of their colleagues who are lying in prison, or who are suffering terrible things in the far north, far from their families and from their congregations, in the forests or in the concentration camps, or who were able to escape in time and now are wandering about, to-day here and to-morrow there, in constant danger of being caught by their pursuers. God alone knows their need and God alone can help them.

The great need of our brethren in Russia has brought the Mennonites of the entire world closer together. Previously we were strangers and to-day we are so close together. One feels this when one comes to his brethren in the various congregations or into their homes, whether it is in Germany, Holland, the United States, or Canada.

Again in these days, as I have so often before, I let the conditions of our Mennonite communities at home in Russia since the revolution pass before my mind's eye: economic disintegration, famine, emigration, flight, etc., and finally I stopped a few moments beside the graves of our dear ones in the lonely railroad stations along the northern railroad and in the infinite stretches of primitive forests in the far north. I vision the brethren who are crowded together there in the narrow barracks where many a mother heart cries out to the Lord for a daughter who has been torn from her, where hungry children cry for bread, and where the sick cry for help, where thousands and thousands long for deliverance and where no help is to be had. I vision my colleagues who are now for over a year in prison in Moscow, who are being

tortured. There are so many thousands who are waiting in vain for help and yet we know that the Lord cares for all and will act when the time comes. And then when I think of all the wonderful help which the Mennonites of the entire world have rendered to their brethren in need, then I can better understand what the Apostle Paul meant in his challenge to the Galatians (Gal. 6:9) "Let us not be weary in well-doing." Dear brethren, you and your churches are not yet weary, this conference demonstrates it to us. How is that possible? Only because God has loved us human beings with a love eternal, love which exceeds all thought in its mercy, and exceeds all comprehension, and this conference is a new demonstration of love.

The Lord has given us Mennonites of Russia many friends. He has also given us the right men who with much love and with a sanctified patience from the Lord have conducted a work of relief and salvation for us and continue to do so. How gladly I would like to mention the sacrificing work of each of these brethren, but that is not possible to-day. Nevertheless, each representative of our 20,000 immigrants to Canada, and our dear refugees in Brazil, and Paraguay, and Moelln, will, I am sure, join with me. I feel the need on this historic occasion of thanking you and your churches most heartily. May this conference be filled with the spirit of Christ and may its participants perform the work of the conference, equipped with a strong faith. Let us remind ourselves again that "other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, Christ Jesus." Only on this foundation are we able "to each bear his brother's burden," and that in the full sense of the apostolic word. Let us, therefore, do all that we do, whatever we counsel together and whatever we wish to undertake, as before Him and under the authority of His word. To Him, the Father, belongeth the honor, and His blessing I wish to this conference in rich measure.

THE ALLEN COUNTY, OHIO, MENNONITE SETTLEMENT

John Umble

When Fairfield county Mennonites removed to Allen county they brought with them the same religious and social conditions that they and their fathers had brought with them to Fairfield from Virginia. Most of them had come directly from Virginia to Fairfield, but a few had first stopped in Western Pennsylvania. During the eight or ten years that Christian Stehmann, father of Bishop Henry Stemen, was living in Pennsylvania several of his children married there. His third youngest daughter Johanna married Abraham De Long, member of the German Reformed Church. They moved to Fairfield with her relatives and followed them to Allen in 1851 where the husband died in 1859. Christian Stemen's youngest daughter married Joseph Shoup (this name is also spelled Shupe and Swope) and died in Pennsylvania. Both of them seem to have been Mennonites. Bishop Henry Stemen's daughter, Mary, married George Hunsaker, a Baptist minister. He followed his Mennonite father-in-law to Allen county in 1852 but settled six or seven miles northwest of Salem church. Tradition remembers him as a man above reproach in every respect. He was justice of the peace for many years. He and his youngest brother-in-law, Samuel Stemen, were the executors of Bishop Henry Stemen's will in 1855. Bishop Henry Stemen's two oldest sons married Dunkards named Maricle (also spelled Miracle, Mericle, Markley and Markle). The eldest, John, evidently united with that denomination and his son, Abraham, became a minister in the Dunkard church in Fairfield. The bishop's second son, Isaac, was not converted until he was over seventy years old when he was baptized a member of the Mennonite church. One of the bishop's daughters, Susanna, married Christian Miller, probably a Dunkard, and four of her sons became musicians in the northern army during the Civil War. Practically all of the children of two of Bishop Henry Stemen's daughters, Barbara and Margaret (Mrs. Samuel Sherrick and Mrs. Henry Sherrick, respectively), united with the Methodist or United Brethren churches after marrying members of the German Reformed, Lutheran, or Baptist churches.

These examples, selected almost at random, illustrate the great complexity of the religious question as it faced the founders of the Salem Mennonite church.

A number of factors encouraged young Mennonites to associate and intermarry with other religious groups. First of all, German, the language of their fathers, was almost universally preferred and used as the language of the fireside and the social circle by their neighbors, most of whom were descended from Lancaster county or Virginia Pennsylvania-Germans. All the stories and incidents handed down by tradition from the early days are transmitted in a purer German than one hears spoken to-day by such of their descendants as can speak it at all. In the second place, from the early Virginia days, when, according to Strickler, Baptists proselyted whole sections of the Mennonite church in Virginia, followed later by the Dunkards and River Brethren, denominational and racial lines were to a large extent removed. Near relatives were found in many different communions and marriage among near relatives, even first cousins, was not at all uncommon. Hence, there was a constant breaking across denominational lines. Another important factor was the comparative social equality of the frontier. Everyone cleared a plot of ground and raised farm crops or worked at a trade. Occupational and social barriers could scarcely exist where neighbors did the same work, and no one had a great amount of wealth. Practically all religious denominations proscribed questionable forms of amusement. And most people, whether from choice, habit, or necessity, dressed simply. Under such conditions intimate association between denominational groups was not only easy, but it was extremely difficult to avoid it even in the few cases where it was considered desirable.

Many of the names found among the first settlers in Fairfield were among the first in Allen. Adam Buzzard was among the first to buy land near Salem church. Arnold Burtsch, who lived across the line in Putnam county, sold Bishop Henry Stemen his eighty acres of improved land near the church. Daniel D. Conrad and his wife, Frances, sold to Isaac Smart in 1835 the one hundred sixty acres where Salem church now stands, the land later sold to Deacon Peter Stemen. Stemen's deed in 1839 was made out by Asa Wright, justice of the peace, and witnessed by his wife Emily. Michael Ridenour and his wife Hannah are said by Howe to have settled about two miles south of Lima in 1831, but in 1838 they too owned land near the present site of Salem church. Both Asa Wright, justice of the peace, and John Wright, witnessed a deed

in 1837. In 1837 it required $1000.00 cash at the hands of Peter Stemen to persuade David and Nancy Bryan to give up their improved home three and one-half miles west of Salem church although they had paid only two hundred for it two years earlier. John C. Bowman seems to have been a resident in 1838. The Lutheran Shoemakers and Sakemillers of Sugar Creek township, Allen county, evidently came from Fairfield. The Pfeifers and Zears (Zehr?) seem also to have been Lutherans. Joshua and Lovina (Eyer) (Oyer) Allgire may not have been near neighbors of the Stemens in Fairfield but probably came from Pleasant township about 1853. From the foregoing it is evident that many of the settlers of the southern part of Sugar Creek township, Allen county, both Mennonite and non-Mennonite, were from Fairfield county.

Fairfield county and the older eastern settlements did not send all their emigrants to Allen county, however. This was only one part of a great western movement that had begun early in the century and was to continue almost unchecked for another fifty years until the enterprise or the curiosity of the land-hungry emigrant should be satisfied. Although most of the Fairfield county Mennonites who left Fairfield settled in Allen county (a complete account of this migration is given in the January, 1932, issue of the REVIEW), their relatives and friends were moving into other Ohio counties also. Some moved to Champaign county near Mechanicsburg, some to other communities. Here their identity as Mennonite descendants was lost, of course; but Preacher Daniel Brenneman of Fairfield preached a funeral sermon for Catherine (Brenneman) Franck, a member of the Baptist Church in Champaign county early in 1865. In the same year Christian Kauffman who formerly lived in Richland county, died in Mercer county. A strong settlement of Mennonites was founded in Logan county by Henry Kulp and Daniel Funk beginning 1831, but through emigration and Dunkard proselyting this colony became extinct. Mennonite settlements were founded a little later in Clark, Green, and Montgomery counties (Ohio). The Medway congregation still exists in Montgomery county. A strong colony of Fairfield and Hocking county River Brethren pushed on into Darke county near the Indiana state line to become a strong Brethren in Christ church later. Many of the names honored in the annals of Western Ohio history were first prominently connected with the Mennonites, German Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists, Albrights (Evangelicals), or Baptists of Fairfield.

In Allen county, one of the fourteen Ohio counties that had been organized by the year 1820, local government was first established in 1831, the year in which John Stemen (See the REVIEW, January, 1932, p. 20f.) and Michael Ridenour from Fairfield county first settled in Allen. Hundreds of Indians still roamed the woods or huddled together in their unsanitary ramshackle shelters. In 1831 about five hundred Senecas left. In 1832 the Shawnees, including the group on the Lewistown reservation in Logan county, also consented to accept lands west of the Mississippi. But the Hog Creek tribe in Allen county did not leave until 1833.

Roads there were none. The first settlers from Fairfield found no road beyond Roundhead in Hardin county. From that point forward to Lima they were obliged to "chop out" a road for their wagons. The road from Lima to Elida was chopped out in the same year. Even after the roads had been opened with the ax nearly everyone rode horseback for many years. Although the roads were "open," stumps, mudholes, and ruts made them almost impassable for any sort of vehicle during the larger part of the year. In the marshy places the trees were felled across the road and the spaces between the logs filled with branches, brush, and soil to make a "corduroy" road.

As early as 1825 the Ohio legislature had passed an act providing for canals, but, when the Miami canal finally reached this section about 1843, it passed between Van Wert and Allen counties eight miles west of Salem church. Hence many of the later arrivals settled in Marion township nearer the canal or even in Van Wert county on the other side of the canal. At an early date a post road from Piqua to Fort Defiance supplied postal facilities once a week. When the first railroad was completed across the state from the Ohio River to Lake Erie, Allen county Mennonites derived little direct benefit from it. Not only did this railway lie forty miles to the east, but the Scioto marsh interposed its impassable expanse of black muck between the Allen county Mennonites and the railroad.

Lack of means of communication, however, was by no means the only inconvenience. Allen county lay in the southern part of the "Great Black Swamp" that covered fourteen northwestern Ohio counties. Dense forests shaded most of this area. Drainage was poor. Whenever a tree was felled the mud and water splashed almost as high as the tree tops. Swarms of mosquitoes filled the air. Malaria with its attendant fits of ague sent the colonist shiv-

ering and uncomfortable to the shelter of his rude hut. One historian states that the section never could have been settled without the aid of quinine and calomel. But there were compensations. The soil was almost unbelievably fertile and easily cultivated and there were no hills! To the Mennonite farmer, fresh from the Rush Creek township or Perry county hills, Allen county seemed to promise every earthly advantage that rural-minded folk could wish.

But even then they exercised more than ordinary caution in changing their location. Ten years elapsed between the settlement of John Stemen and his family in Allen county and the emigration of Bishop Henry Stemen and his band of hardy pioneers in 1841. At that time the Miami canal was already nearing completion and the future economic prosperity of the country well-assured.

As already stated in an earlier article in the REVIEW (January, 1932), John and Nancy (Stukey) Stemen, Christian and Margaret (Moyer) Stemen, Deacon Peter Stemen and wife Mary Magdalena Swick, and Peter Stemen, Jr., and wife Mary Blosser, with some of their Fairfield county neighbors had already made their home in Allen county before Bishop Henry Stemen and a number of others came in 1841 to found a permanent Mennonite settlement in Sugar Creek township. No written records of the early church have been preserved. The only record that has been handed down was compiled from memory by a number of the older members of the Salem church and other early settlers who met at a reunion at Elida in 1911. According to this record, of the above settlers, only Deacon Peter Stemen was a member of the Mennonite church. The Stemen Family History, compiled in 1881 by Dr. C. B. Stemen, is silent in the matter of the church relations of John, Christian, and Peter, Jr. What evidence there is, although chiefly negative, indicates that the 1911 record is correct in excluding these names from the list of charter members of the Salem congregation. Christian's election as county commissioner for several terms indicates that he was not a Mennonite. Andrew, eldest son of Peter, Jr., was a Mennonite, however, and was ordained deacon at Salem in 1865. This Andrew Stemen was the father-in-law of Preacher Moses Brenneman, son of Bishop John M. Brenneman. The 1911 record names the following as charter members of the Salem congregation: John and Mary (Statler) Sherrick (probably, earlier, Scharrich), Peter and Barbara (Lehman) Diller, John Burkholder and wife, Henry and Elizabeth Funk, Henry and Mary (Beery) Stemen, Peter and Mary Mag-

dalena (Swick) Stemen, David and Eve Campbell, Samuel and Barbara (Stemen) Sherrick, Henry and Margaret (Stemen) Sherrick, Joseph Lamen (single), and Christian Stemen (Stehmann), the father of Bishop Henry Stemen. His wife had died in Fairfield county in 1834 and lies buried in the Stewart cemetery.

This entire group, with the exception of Deacon Peter Stemen's family, seems to have made the trip from Fairfield to Allen in a body (1841). How different from the poverty-stricken group of near-bankrupts that came straggling into Fairfield from Pennsylvania and Virginia three and four decades earlier! Some of them used three wagons to transport their farming implements and household goods to their new home. Although William Knittle and John Stemen had "cut out" a road from Lima to Elida in 1831 the new settlers were obliged to cut their way through from Lima to the Sugar Creek township settlement. Most of the older men purchased improved land and moved at once into log-cabins already erected, but younger men like the Sherrick brothers purchased an eighth or a quarter section of virgin forest and then cooked their meals in the open and slept in their wagons until they had cut and burned enough trees to make room for erecting a log-cabin. Henry Sherrick was a strong, robust man. He helped to "cut out" the road from Lima to Gomer. Many of these first settlers enjoyed nothing more than to spend a day in the woods with an ax. They became expert woodcutters. The younger Henry Stemen had an almost passionate fondness for "working in the woods."

The new settlers had scarcely arrived before they organized a congregation and held services. Henry Stemen had now been a bishop for over twenty years. Two of the members, the aged Peter Stemen and John Sherrick, had been deacons for a considerable period. These three officers assumed charge of the little congregation and conducted services regularly in the homes of members. The bishop and the two deacons acted as trustees, also, in the early years. Bishop Stemen seems to have been the only active bishop in western Ohio for a number of years. John Thut did not move to Bluffton until 1848 and was not ordained bishop until 1857. Bishop Jonas Shank of Blanchard was never a strong leader and was a very ordinary speaker. Bishop Daniel Funk of Logan county was not ordained until about the time that Stemen moved to Allen. And until Stemen ordained John M. Brenneman bishop in Franklin county in 1849, he continued his bishop oversight of the Franklin-Fairfield-Perry county group. Hence, although the Men-

nonite church never had a regularly organized itinerary, Bishop Henry Stemen was forced by circumstances to be an itinerant preacher in a very real sense. He never used a horse and buggy and never travelled on the railroad for the very good reason that the only practical means of conveyance was horseback. He always loved horses, kept good ones, and gave them excellent care. On his pastoral journeys that took him to Wyandott, Wood, Seneca, Williams, and Fairfield counties, he usually rode forty miles a day, picking his way through the almost pathless forests, and swimming his horse across bridgeless, swollen rivers while he knelt in the saddle. On these tiresome trips he preached, baptized, held communion services in churches or in private residences, with a congregation or with an isolated Mennonite family far from a congregation of their own faith. He preached funeral sermons over the graves of those who had been quietly laid away months before without a burial service because no minister could be summoned in time for the burial. He ordained bishops, ministers, and deacons in the churches under his charge. On at least one occasion he rode horseback to the Conference in Mahoning county, and he made numerous trips to Fairfield until after he had ordained John M. Brenneman bishop in Franklin county.

Bishop Stemen's increasingly heavy duties as itinerant pastor for the growing number of Mennonite settlers in northwestern Ohio at last made it necessary for him to ordain a helper in the home congregation at Elida. In 1847 the congregation held an election for minister. Henry Funk, John Burkholder, and Peter Diller having received votes, the congregation proceeded to select one of them by lot. The lot fell on John Burkholder and he was ordained. On account of ministers moving into the community from Fairfield and Franklin, no further ordinations were necessary until 1871 to supply the local congregation with ministers. The first of these ministers to settle in Allen county, after the first group located there, was Christian Culp. He was born in Rockingham county, Virginia, in 1815, and accompanied his parents to Logan county, Ohio, in 1831. In 1837 he returned to Fairfield county, married Elizabeth Good, and made his residence there for the next fifteen years. Sometime after their marriage, he and his wife united with the Mennonite church. In 1846 he was ordained to the ministry. He was wholly without education and the astonished and emphatic expression of one of the members when he heard of Culp's ordination—"Why, he can't preach!"—was silently concurred in by more than a few. But he applied himself dili-

gently to his divinely appointed task and became a fluent, eloquent speaker. In 1865 when he revisited the scene of his early labors, a correspondent writing to the *Herald of Truth* speaks of "Christian Culp's . . . most beautiful and soul-cheering sermon." He always favored an intensely conservative program of church work and discipline. Old settlers are quoted as saying that, if ever a man was without an enemy, it was Preacher Christian Culp.

In 1853, the year following Culp's removal to Allen county,[1] George Brenneman also decided to leave for the level stretches of the Black Swamp. He purchased two densely wooded tracts in southern Putnam county several miles northwest of the Sugar Creek township settlement. For some reason, however, he could not obtain possession until the following year and did not move until March, 1854. His land lay about a mile west of the village of Rymer. Here he resided until his death in 1889. Before he succeeded in clearing his land he was obliged to burn a good-sized fortune in black walnut logs and another in other kinds of hard wood timber. An incident that shows some of the drawbacks of the frontier occurred soon after Brenneman arrived in Putnam county. Like his neighbors he tied a cow-bell on one of his cows and turned his herd out to pasture in the forest. They were lost for several weeks. Finally, in reply to a newspaper advertisement, he received a letter from a resident of Bellefontaine, Ohio, stating that he had found the cows straying on his property. Brenneman set out at once to bring them back. One cow in the herd had evidently become homesick and had determined to return to Fairfield! The others had followed and were nearly half way home before their progress was arrested.

Bishop George Brenneman was born in Rush Creek township, Fairfield county, on the old Pleasant Hill homestead of Henry Brenneman in 1821. In 1840 he married Anna Burkholder, of Knox county, Ohio, who was born in Rockingham county, Virginia. Some time after their marriage both young people united with the Mennonite church in Fairfield county. He was chosen by lot and ordained to the ministry in the Pleasant Hill church in 1849. His home in Putnam county was often referred to by Bishop John F. Funk of Elkhart, Indiana, as "the cheerful home of Bishop George

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[1] This date for Culp's migration is given in the *Funk Family History*, p. 321, and also in Christian Culp's obituary in the *Herald of Truth*, Vol. XX (Feb. 15, 1883), p. 60. He purchased two adjoining forty-acre tracts, however, in Allen county, on November 8, 1851, and some of his descendants insist that he moved to Allen county so early as 1850.

Brenneman." Although Brenneman was a strict disciplinarian and an earnest Christian of deep piety, he loved good company and his fireside rang with hearty laughter. His wife was a kind and indulgent mother and a cheerful companion. There is some evidence that she was not so strict as her bishop-husband. On one occasion while Brenneman was away from home his little girls braided their hair according to a new style that called for one braid on each side of their head and another down the back. He returned unexpectedly while the family was at dinner. He noticed their hair on the instant that he entered the room and, before the girls finished their meal, required them to rearrange it in the single braid that they usually wore.

He was a man of deep conviction and indomitable will and may not always have exercised the best tact in handling problems of discipline, but he had many warm friends who preferred him to his sterner brother, John M. Brenneman. George Brenneman, unlike most of the Brennemans, was heavy set and inclined to stockiness rather than height. He had great physical strength, but did not always conserve it wisely. He sold to the C. D. and St. L. Railroad a right of way through his land in 1881. In helping to clear this strip a few years later, he suffered a serious injury while lifting logs. For several years he could not perform any manual labor nor even his duties as bishop. He partially recovered from this injury, but about five years later, died from its effects at the age of sixty-eight. He was a miller by trade and operated a flour mill on the canal at Delphos, for many years after he moved to Putnam county.

It seems likely that, when the young ministers Christian Culp and George Brenneman left Fairfield for Putnam county, they did so at Bishop Henry Stemen's invitation. The aged bishop was already seventy-seven, and Preacher John Burkholder, although a fine old man, was never a successful preacher and gave little promise of leadership. Besides, his use of chewing tobacco was not considered as setting a good example to the young men of the congregation. In fact some of the boys treated him with mild disrespect on that account. The deacons, too, were very old men as old or older than Bishop Stemen himself. At any rate George Brenneman was scarcely settled in his Putnam county home before the aged bishop called a meeting for the ordination of his successor. When Christian Culp and George Brenneman went through the lot, it fell on Brenneman and he was ordained at once. This

was in the spring of 1854 near George Brenneman's thirty-third birthday.

For some reason that is not now clear Bishop Stemen does not seem to have felt at ease in committing the future of his congregation to Bishop George Brenneman. There is strong probability that Stemen induced John M. Brenneman whom he had ordained bishop in Franklin county five years earlier to move to Allen county to take over the aged bishop's office even after the latter had ordained George Brenneman as bishop. At all events, in 1855, one year after George Brenneman had been ordained bishop of the Salem Mennonite congregation Bishop John M. Brenneman purchased one hundred seventy-six acres east of the church. Soon afterward with all possible solemnity, seriousness, and formality, Henry Stemen officially delivered his bishopric to Bishop John M. Brenneman and formally installed him as the official head of the congregation. The sermon that the venerable bishop preached on this occasion was remembered long after as one of great eloquence and of superior imaginative power and beauty, a sermon full of solemn warnings concerning the future trials of the church, but with a dominant note of victorious hope. As if his work were at last ended, Stemen, nearly blind and quite feeble with age and the exposure incident to frontier life, succumbed to an attack of malarial fever a few months later.

His elder brother, Peter, who had stood by him many years as deacon, survived him less than a year, passing away May 5, 1856. The other aged deacon, John Sherrick, died in 1857. To fill the vacancy caused by their death Christian Lamen, who had moved to the settlement from Richland county, was ordained deacon in 1857. In 1855 Deacon Christian D. Beery, an uncle of the Brenneman brothers, had moved into the community and assisted with pastoral and ministerial duties until 1865 when he sold his property in Putnam county at considerable sacrifice and moved to Branch county, Michigan, where he died in 1878 at the age of 62. In 1835 when he was about nineteen he married Nancy Blosser, sixteen-year-old daughter of the pioneer immigrants Isaac and Elizabeth Blosser in Fairfield county. A few years after their marriage they united with the Mennonite church. They moved to Hocking county in 1838, and to Franklin in 1852 where, in the same year, he was ordained deacon. In 1855 they moved to Allen county with Beery's nephew. He was ordained to the ministry in Branch county in 1867 and to the bishopric in 1869.

The removal of Deacon Christian D. Beery in 1865 made the ordination of a deacon necessary. The congregation ordained to this office two men, Abraham A. Good, farmer and cabinet maker, and Andrew Stemen, already referred to above as the grandson of Deacon Peter Stemen and the father-in-law of Moses Brenneman, ordained to the ministry twenty years later (1885).

By 1865, through the almost unprecedented activity of Bishop John M. Brenneman Allen county had become one of the outstanding Mennonite centers of the West. Every minister who had moved from Fairfield or Franklin county to Allen had brought with him several families of relatives and friends. During the Civil War a veritable exodus took place of Fairfield county Mennonites to Allen. Even before 1850 the colony had spread southward beyond Elida, northward into Jennings township, Putnam county, westward into Marion township as far as Delphos and even beyond Delphos into Van Wert county. Relatives and friends continued to arrive from Virginia, also, and other points in the east.

The original settlers had erected a log-cabin church in 1847. The year following the arrival of Bishop John M. Brenneman, 1856, it became necessary to rebuild, and the congregation erected a frame church, twenty-eight by thirty-six feet. By 1860 so many members lived west of Elida that it was found necessary to hold services in various school-houses in that vicinity. And before 1865 it had already become evident that a new church building must be erected in the eastern part of Marion township. This building was not erected, however, until 1874.

In spite of the great increase in church membership and the tremendous activity of the Brenneman brothers, the conscientious historian is forced to record that a great deal of dissatisfaction prevailed. The descendants of Bishop Henry Stemen with their friends considered the discipline of the Brennemans unnecessarily strict and arbitrary. Many of them refused to unite with the Mennonite church. The United Brethren, Methodists, and Christian churches claimed scores of the young people of the second generation as they did in many other places. Although Bishop John M. Brenneman preached some English sermons from the very date of his ordination, many of his members opposed the use of English in their services. Sermons, hymn-singing, prayers, and the ordinary conversation of every day were largely German, that is, "Pennsylvania Dutch," until long after 1870.

Local jealousies may have had a part in promoting the general unrest, and amid the changing scene of the frontier the bishop and other disciplinary officers received the blame for conditions over which they had no control. One such condition was largely due to the traditional method of "joining church." Children never, and young people seldom, united with the congregation as church-members. In fact it was the rule for young people of Mennonite parentage to marry before being baptized and received into the church. Before that time they were subject to the strict discipline of the Mennonite home, but they were under no other obligation to observe the rules of the church. So long as the frontier was poor and everyone wore deerskin or homespun clothing, it was comparatively easy to observe and enforce the strictest interpretation of the rule of Biblical simplicity which has always been a cardinal principle of Mennonite practice. Later with the coming of economic prosperity and more rapid means of communication, the frontier young people aped the fashions of the city. Mennonite parents, thoughtless of the possible consequences, indulged their children in some of the new vanities in dress. Hence, when the time came for uniting with the church, her discipline required a radical change in dress on their part and many of the young people, unwilling to adopt the simple mode of dress worn by their parents and prescribed by the church, united with some other denomination. Besides, their long separation from the church during their formative years had allowed them to form business, social, and even political connections which the church discipline disapproved and which they were not willing to sever. Since the church maintained no Sunday schools nor any kind of religious activity for children and young people, youth of Mennonite parentage had little opportunity to appreciate and understand the value of certain Biblical principles as taught and exemplified by the Mennonite church. Numbers of them with the consent of their parents attended Sunday schools conducted by members of other denominations. This, again, made it easy for them to unite with other churches.

Under these trying conditions, if the bishop pointed out the probable result of certain practices and behavior, he was accused by over-indulgent and short-sighted parents of being too strict with the young people. When these same young people refused to be baptized into the Mennonite church and united with another, he was accused of being too lax and of not performing his duties properly.

During this trying period of transition Bishop John M. Brenneman held the various elements of the Salem congregation together, but still more important was the work he did for the church at large. He did for the Mennonite church in the West during the years from 1855 to 1870, what Bishop F. Funk did in a different way for the church at large from 1870 to 1885 and John S. Coffman from 1885 to 1899.

The work of Bishop John M. Brenneman is still too little understood and appreciated. The science of American church history will stand deeply indebted to the biographer of this truly great man. He was born in 1816, in Fairfield county, Ohio, the eldest son of Henry and Barbara (Beery) Brenneman. His father was a farmer and miller and the son followed in his footsteps in the choice of an occupation. He had a cousin also named John. In order to distinguish him from his cousin he was called John the miller and finally John Miller Brenneman. He married Sophia Good in 1837, the same year in which Christian Culp married her sister, Elizabeth. He was ordained to the ministry in April, 1844, in Fairfield county. At that time he could neither read nor write, but he at once started to school with his three older children and made remarkable progress. In spite of his efforts, however, he never mastered the intricacies of written language, and the valuable articles that he contributed to the *Herald of Truth* always required a great deal of editing. Of spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and sentence structure he knew practically nothing. In 1848 he moved to Franklin county, apparently to look after the congregation there and probably at the suggestion of Bishop Henry Stemen. The next year he was ordained bishop at that place and in 1855 he moved to Allen county as already noted. With the death of Bishop Henry Stemen a great deal of pastoral work fell to his charge. For some years he was the only bishop in western Ohio who assumed any responsibility outside his own congregation. He traveled extensively on foot, on horseback, by wagon and by train in pastoral work from central Ohio to Iowa and Missouri, reclaiming backsliders, baptizing converts, establishing churches, ordaining ministers, and administering the rites of the church. He attended conferences from Indiana to Virginia and became so absorbed in home missionary work that he paid little attention to his farm. He seldom knew how many head of cattle he owned. He was away from home for weeks at a time during the summer and spent the long winter evenings in Bible study, meditation, prayer, and writing.

During the Civil war he was especially concerned in maintaining and teaching the scriptural attitude on peace. In 1863 he carried about with him for some time the manuscript for his booklet, "Christianity and War," undecided whether it were safe to print it. He showed it to a young Chicago lumber dealer, John F. Funk, on one of his western evangelizing trips. Funk encouraged him to print it and offered to edit the work for him. The resulting friendship, mutually strengthening, stimulating, supplementing the convictions of each as it did, gave rise to the publishing interests of the Mennonite church and made possible the extension of the work of Bishop Brenneman. During the next few years Funk came to Brenneman one day and said, "Here is two hundred dollars; use it in preaching the Gospel and extending the Lord's work." A little over a year later Funk asked, "How is the Lord's fund holding out?" and received the reply "It is not half used yet." More than a year after this time Brenneman announced to Funk that the fund was exhausted. Brenneman repaid the loan in a practical way of advertising the new church periodical, *The Herald of Truth* and by furthering the cause of the Sunday school and of church unity which lay so near to the heart of Funk.

In 1866, however, Bishop Brenneman voted affirmatively on two issues at the Virginia conference that caused him much regret later. He voted to condemn Sunday schools, especially as they were then conducted by Mennonites in Illinois, and to advocate revision of the attitude of the church on divorce to permit the innocent party who puts away his companion for the scriptural reason to remarry. (For a discussion of this action and the resulting controversy see my article in the MENNONITE QUARTERLY REVIEW, "Steps leading to General Conference," Vol. III, January, 1929, p. 13). Both he and the Virginia conference soon reversed themselves on both questions, but there is little doubt that his attitude on the divorce question impaired his influence, especially among the Amish and Amish Mennonites whom he was greatly interested in bringing into a closer unity with the Mennonite church.

Bishop John M. Brenneman never enjoyed robust health like his brothers, George and Daniel, and needed constantly to guard against cold and damp. On more than one occasion his uncle, Christian D. Beery, carried him on his back across streams that must be forded. But soon after 1870 he began to suffer from shaking palsy and before 1875 he was so seriously afflicted that it was impossible for him to preach or to continue his duties as bish-

op. His brother George gradually took up that work, but for the next twenty years Bishop John M. Brenneman continued to read, write, and study and to give his younger co-laborers the benefit of his valuable counsel. He outlived both of the ministers who had moved to Allen county shortly before he did, Bishop George Brenneman and Preacher Christian Culp, and, although his body at last grew so feeble that he lost his voice, he retained his mental faculties clear and undimmed to the last.

As already stated John M. Brenneman had taken an adverse stand on the Sunday school question at the Virginia Conference in 1866, but conditions at home and the influence of John F. Funk soon led him to a change of attitude. Sunday schools were being conducted in schoolhouses in various parts of the settlement and in some of the churches. A union Sunday school was being held in the Sandy Point schoolhouse. Here a woman, a member of the Congregationalist church, was superintendent, and American Sunday School Union supplies were in use. At the time of his death Isaac Stemen, first superintendent of the Salem Mennonite Sunday school still preserved *The Child's Scripture Question Book* and the *Union Hymns* which he had used in the Sandy Point Sunday school.

From the beginning, however, there had been Sunday schools in Allen county. They were contemporary with the first community development. Patrick Gains Goode seems to have organized one there in 1831. At all events he was appointed state Sunday school agent in 1832 (possibly by the American Sunday School Union) "to travel in Shelby and counties north of it for the purpose of organizing Sunday schools." After the Civil War the movement received new impetus and it seems to have been this renewal of Sunday school propaganda that forced the question upon the attention of church leaders in a number of other denominations as well as Mennonites that previously had been, to a considerable extent, hostile to Sunday schools.

In 1867, the year after Bishop Brenneman had joined the Virginia conference in its unanimous disapproval of Sunday schools, he withdrew his objections and voted with the Ohio Mennonite conference in favor of such schools under certain conditions. From this time on he urged John F. Funk of Elkhart to come to Elida to assist in organizing a Mennonite Sunday school, and Funk had promised to do so. The latter, however, found it impossible to visit Elida until August 16, 1868. On that date in the forenoon the Sunday school was organized. According to Funk's statement

all the local ministers attended this meeting. Preacher Henry Shank from the Blanchard congregation in Putnam county was also present. In a lengthy article in the *Herald of Truth* (Vol. V, No. 9, September, 1868, p. 137) Funk gives an excellent account of the organization meeting and his connection with it. Several reasons may have induced Brenneman to call on Funk for assistance. In the first place tradition says that there was an earlier unsuccessful attempt, and when Bishop Brenneman once set his hand to a matter he was not likely to accept defeat after one trial. Then, too, although some of the more progressive members had long favored Sunday school and had even encouraged their children to attend the union Sunday schools in the neighborhood, others vigorously opposed such an organization in the church. The janitor, Henry Sherrick, a devoted member of undoubted piety and sincerity, declared that if such a worldly institution were brought into the meetinghouse, he would give up the keys. Preacher Christian Culp objected that the organization of the Sunday school and holding it in the afternoon would interfere with the time-honored and semi-sacred custom of extending Christian hospitality to fellow church members on the Lord's Day. Others objected to bringing a "school" into the church. Bishop Brenneman's firm but kindly answer was, "Then, let us call it Kinder Lehre!"

The organization was conducted entirely in German. Funk afterward commended the young people for their interest and for the good order that they maintained. All were eager to gain a better knowledge of the German language and a number had already applied themselves diligently to studying it during the previous week. One of the avowed reasons for organizing this Sunday school was to study the German language. Bishop John M. Brenneman used this as one of the strongest arguments to overcome opposition to the school. He stated this argument in an article in the *Herald of Truth* (Vol. V, Jan. 1869, p. 3):

> The reason why we established a German Sunday school here, is first, because we ourselves are German, and do not have any other German schools, and we think we should not allow the noble German language to pass away entirely from among us; for if our children cannot read German who will read our German books, when once we have passed away from the earth. . . . We still converse with our children in the German language, and therefore we also prefer to instruct them in matters of religion, in the German language.

Interest in the new German school at Sherrick's meetinghouse was so great that even non-Mennonites attended to learn the German

language. Among these was a practicing physician whose home was in Elida.

Funk's above-named article in the *Herald of Truth* gives the following account of the meeting for organization:

> After singing several hymns, prayer, and a short address in which the object, importance, and necessity of a Sunday school, not only for the purpose of instructing the children in the language, but more especially for the purpose of instructing them in the truths of the Bible, and pointing them to Jesus the Savior of mankind, were set forth, the school was organized into classes, and a teacher appointed for each class. Half an hour was then given to the lesson, during which each teacher gave such instruction to his or her class as appeared appropriate and necessary. After the lesson was ended, the school was closed by prayer and singing.

In the same article Funk continues:

> If we desire to see our churches grow, and our young people, as they come to years of maturity and responsibility, gathered into the fold, we must use means, we must labor, we must teach them early, to love the Savior, to go to the house of the Lord, to reverence and keep holy the Sabbath day, to have a love and respect for Christian people, and for all the services of the sanctuary. Thus, through faithful instruction, we may lead them in the narrow path that leadeth to eternal life. "Train up," says Solomon, "a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

One of the principal difficulties was to secure competent teachers. Since none of the older members had any experience in Sunday school work, it became necessary at first to call in members of other denominations as teachers. One of these was Rebecca Good whose father was a Mennonite but whose mother never was. Rebecca Good herself was never a Mennonite and she wore her hat while she taught the class. A Mrs. Henry Miller, a Methodist of Mennonite descent (her maiden name was Catharine Stemen and her husband, a Civil War veteran, not a Christian), also taught a class of children in the early days. Salem Sunday school in the beginning, therefore, was to a certain extent a union effort held in a Mennonite meetinghouse and directed by the ministers of the congregation. Much of the criticism was directed at this union aspect of the school that tolerated, as teachers, women who wore hats.

Bishop John M. Brenneman, accordingly, received severe criticism from some of his members for allowing Sunday school in his church. Many feared that it would bring pride and corruption into the church; some considered it merely a custom of the world. He meets these criticisms in his usual earnest, firm, frank

manner in an article to the *Herald of Truth* written November 23, 1868 (Vol. VI, No. 1, January, 1869, pp. 3, 4). After explaining why they organized a Sunday school at Salem and how it is conducted, he meets the stock Mennonite objections of that day to such schools and closes with the admonition: "Brethren! do not reject a good thing before you have fully examined it. Throw away your prejudices, and make a fair trial with such a school, and you will no doubt view the matter in another light, for it is necessary that we should accommodate ourselves to the times in which we live . . . and should put forth every effort to save our children and bring ourselves and them to Jesus." His account of their method of conducting the school is interesting and illuminating.

> First, we sing, generally such hymns as are appropriate for children and youths. Then we read a chapter, or a part of a chapter from the Bible. Sometimes it may be about the creation of the world, or of the fall of man, or of the promise of the Savior, or of Cain and Abel's offering, or of the offering of Isaac, or of a suitable psalm, &c., from which, generally, some suitable remarks are made, as plainly as possible, so that the children may be able to understand them. Then prayer is offered. After this then the school is divided into classes. The classes are made large or small, in proportion as we have few or many teachers. The little boys and girls have the small primers, the larger scholars have the large primers or the spelling books. Others that can read pretty well also use the Testament. The teachers are brethren for the male, and mostly sisters for the female classes. After the school is arranged in classes, half or three-quarters of an hour, and sometimes, perhaps more, is spent with the lesson, in instructing the children. Occasionally also some dark passages of scripture are explained to the children, and generally before the close of the school some passages of scripture are read and explained. Sometimes they are such as occur in the chapter containing the lesson for the day. Sometimes also questions are asked of the scholars. If they cannot answer them the teacher does it himself. We endeavor to instruct the children in such a manner as their young minds may be able to understand. Sometimes also a short exhortation is given to them. Then we pray and sing again and close the school. The leaders of the school have thus far been one of the ministers or deacons. Sometimes they are all there and help one another.

It requires very little reading between the lines to reveal that here were brave sincere souls making the best of discouraging conditions and carrying on in the face of lethargy, indifference, and open hostility.

The primers and spelling books referred to by Bishop Brenneman may have been *The American Tract Primer* (German)

and the *German Spelling Book* which Funk was advertising at this time. Early in the next year he issued a reprint of the small German catechism, originally printed by Mennonites in Germany and reprinted in 1824 by the brotherhood in Canada. Funk claimed for this book that it "is especially adapted to the use of children in schools and Sabbath schools, and whereas our brethren maintain German Sunday schools they should have of these books." Although this catechism seems to have been used in the Salem Sunday school, the primers and New Testament continued to be the principal texts. Teaching the German language had been given as one of the two primary reasons for organizing the Sunday school, but German gave way to English during the first decade. The *Words of Cheer* and *Welcome Tidings* were distributed to the children at an early date. Penny collections were supposed to pay for supplies, but the superintendents usually paid most of this money out of their private funds. This condition prevailed even after 1890 when the Mennonite quarterlies were introduced. At that time the deficit made up by the superintendents was in some years more than twenty dollars.

The ministers and deacons conducted the Sunday school during the first year only. At the reorganization in the spring of 1869 Isaac Stemen and Deacon Andrew Stemen were elected superintendents. They seem to have been reelected for a number of years when Moses Brenneman, son of Bishop John M. Brenneman, succeeded his father-in-law, Andrew Stemen, and served with Isaac Stemen until the congregation called him to the ministry. Daniel Brunk followed Moses Brenneman; but Isaac Stemen was reelected from year to year for a long period. Brunk served as superintendent even after he was ordained to the ministry.

During these early years this Sunday school seems to have been held in the afternoon. So late as 1882 Deacon Henry Brenneman of Elkhart, Indiana, visited the Salem Sunday school in the afternoon of June 25. Church services had been held in the forenoon.

When R. J. Heatwole was traveling from Kansas to Virginia in a covered wagon in 1887, he stopped to visit this Sunday school. He was surprised to learn that they omitted the secretary's report. On inquiry he learned that they considered it of "no real profit to take up time in reporting the number of scholars, teachers, and visitors present." In many of the schools Heatwole had visited he had seen the secretary and librarian kept so busy during the Sunday

school hour "that they were hindered from having any benefit of the Sunday school lesson."

Heatwole's report of this practise in the Salem Sunday school aroused considerable discussion in the columns of the *Herald of Truth*. Heatwole himself considered the omission of the report in harmony with the "house keeping" of the Mennonite church since no records were kept of church membership. J. H. M(ellinger?) of Kinzers, Lancaster county, Pennsylvania, expressed a fear that the secretary's report might make proud the dull pupil who attended every Sunday merely to hear his name read in the annual report and might hurt the feelings of some other pupil who was bright but for some unavoidable reason was prevented from being present at every session throughout the summer.

The period between 1880 and 1890 was one of great prosperity for the Salem and Pike congregations. The Sunday school prospered, the evangelistic efforts of Christian B. Brenneman and Moses Brenneman (ordained in 1885) bore rich fruit, and every year saw a large class of young people gathered into the church. Services alternated between the two meetinghouses. The congregation was always considered as one, however, with two buildings. In 1881 church services were held at one meetinghouse in the forenoon and Sunday school at the other in the afternoon. It was the usual custom, however, to hold church services in the morning and Sunday school in the afternoon at the same meetinghouse. If a visiting minister happened to be present, services might be held in the evening at the other church. During this year, largely on account of the evangelistic efforts of Christian B. Brenneman, the church was able to report twenty-nine accessions. Bishop John F. Funk of Elkhart visited the congregation at various times and praised the young people for "their uniformly plain dressing." Other visitors, also, commended the congregation for its adherence to Biblical simplicity. After the middle of this decade John M. Shenk began to make evangelistic trips. In 1886 he was in Somerset county with John S. Coffman, the evangelist. His name appears frequently in the *Herald of Truth* during the next year, and the editor commends him for "presenting in many of his discourses the deep spiritual truths of the gospel."

Like all others of the period, Salem Sunday school was closed in the fall, remained dormant during the winter, and was reorganized in the spring. In 1892 on account of the church conference being held at Salem, the Sunday school was not reorganized until May 8. At that time, Daniel Shenk (ordained to the ministry

in 1900) and Perry Brunk (ordained deacon in 1889) were elected superintendents. In November of the same year Sunday school was reorganized for the winter with the same superintendents. It was reorganized for the summer of 1893 on April 9, but it remained "evergreen" from this time forward. Like many other Sunday schools, Salem long continued the practise of semiannual reorganization in November and April.

About 1894, the Salem congregation organized a Young People's Bible Meeting. Like the evergreen Sunday school this meeting was no doubt the result of the contact with other Mennonite Sunday school workers at the first general Mennonite Sunday school conference in Indiana. The Y. P. B. M. at Salem was the means of developing a large number of active workers, a number of whom have been ordained to the ministry. Among them were: J. B. Brunk, J. M. Brunk, G. H. Brunk, Henry Smith, Perry J. Shenk, N. O. Shenk, and S. G. Shenk. Mention should be made too of Anna Stalter, missionary to India.

From the earliest time, however, the congregation had always been well supplied with ministers. Both of the Brenneman brothers believed that young men of promise should be ordained, not only to strengthen the local ministry but also to supply weaker congregations with ministerial help. Their zeal in this respect seems to have resulted, in a few cases, in the ordination of men who manifested few of the qualifications of the pastor and leader.

For nearly twenty years after the ordination of John Burkholder in 1847 no minister was chosen by the Salem congregation. In 1865, however, seven members of the congregation decided to move to Page county, Iowa. Considering it "inadvisable to let such a little flock go into a strange and far country without a shepherd," they "agreed to elect one of the three brethren to the service of the ministry." The congregation voted for two and the lot fell on Bishop John M. Brenneman's brother-in-law, John S. Good, who served as minister (later as bishop) for nearly twenty-five years in Page county, as one of the pioneer Mennonite pastors and itinerant ministers of the trans-Mississippi frontier. He was born in Hocking county, Ohio, in 1811 and married Sarah Grimm in 1834. Soon after their marriage they united with the Mennonite church. When Bishop John M. Brenneman moved to Allen county, John S. Good accompanied him to the new settlement. He died in Page county, Iowa in 1888.

The third ordination at Salem, that of C. B. Brenneman in 1871, was one of the most important in the history of the congre-

gation. Although bearing the same name as the bishop brothers, he was descended from another Brenneman family. Christian B. Brenneman was born in Wayne county, Ohio. In 1863 he married Susannah, eldest daughter of Bishop John M. Brenneman, and took up his residence in Alien county. He was ordained to the ministry in 1871 and immediately became one of the most active and progressive young ministers in the entire church. Within two years after his ordination he held an evening series of revival meetings in the Mennonite church at Masontown, Pennsylvania. This was at a time when such meetings had not yet come into general favor in the Mennonite church. On this same tour Brenneman preached in Wayne county, Ohio, several times. During the next two decades he continued, cautiously at first but with increasing aggressiveness, to preach evangelistic sermons, East and West, with special emphasis on nonresistance and separation from the world. His sermon on the text, "And God will surely visit you," printed in the *Herald of Truth* (April 1, 1886, p. 97) is well outlined, and rich in illustrative material. A Lancaster county, Pennsylvania, Mennonite who heard him at Orrville in 1887 writes of him: "O how earnestly he plead with those who lean upon their own morality for a staff! How plainly he revealed in his discourse that there is no other way under heaven to be saved but by the blood of Christ." Not only did his evangelistic efforts carry him, summer and winter, from Fayette county, Pennsylvania, to Page county, Iowa, and Marion county, Kansas, but he did considerable doctrinal preaching near home. In 1883 his series of doctrinal sermons at Delphos, Ohio, aroused great interest. He had earlier (1881) held the first series of meetings in the home churches, Salem and Pike. The resident bishops had earlier seen the need for such work and, when C. B. Brenneman asked their permission to conduct revival meetings, they readily granted it. He at once turned the regular morning service held in each church on alternate Sundays into a revival service with special appeals to the unsaved young people and others of the community. Great interest developed and thirty-two conversions resulted. His evangelistic activities eventually embraced ten states. On account of the illness of George Brenneman and the extreme feebleness of John M. Brenneman, C. B. Brenneman served as acting bishop for a number of years.

Meanwhile, however, two other ordinations had taken place. Henry Huber was ordained to the ministry about 1874. Much more important from the standpoint of its influence on the congregation and on the church at large was the ordination of John

M. Shenk, November 30, 1876. During the early part of his ministry he spent most of his time in local pastoral work and in building a home on the forty acres which he purchased soon after his marriage in December, 1868. He cleared the land, erected all the buildings, set out the orchard, and increased it to one hundred ninety acres. After his ordination as bishop, however, in 1889, he devoted much time to traveling among the churches and has been one of the leading Mennonite bishops in Ohio for many years.

John M. Shenk's grandfather, Jacob Shenk, was born in Lancaster county, Pennsylvania, and moved to Rockingham county, Virginia. Jacob's eldest son, Henry, was born there and became the father of John M. Shenk. The family endured the hardships and experienced all the variety of the frontier. Henry Shenk came from Harrisonburg, Virginia, to Fairfield county, Ohio, about 1840 and married Susannah Brenneman, sister of John M. and George Brenneman. They moved to Hocking county about 1845 and cleared eighty acres of forest. Here John M. was born, January 19, 1848. Thence about 1850 they moved to Hamilton county, Indiana, where Henry cleared another eighty and operated a sawmill. The year 1853 saw them back in Franklin county, Ohio, where they remained for a few years before moving back once more to Fairfield county. About 1855 the family settled in Marion township, Allen county. Here at the age of nineteen John M. Shenk united with the church and at once took an active part in Sunday school work. At twenty-one he married Frances Good, daughter of Abraham ("Virginia Abe") and Rebecca (Rhodes) Good, who bore him eleven children all of whom, except the eldest, grew to maturity.

In 1889 when the growing infirmity of Bishop John M. Brenneman and the serious illness of Bishop George Brenneman threatened to leave the Salem and Pike congregation without a bishop, a call was sent to Bishop Abraham Shenk to conduct baptismal services at Blanchard in Putnam county, at New Stark in Hancock county, and at Salem and also to conduct the spring communion services at each of these places. Before performing these rites, however, it was decided that he should ordain a bishop. By that time Salem and Pike had four ministers: Christian B. Brenneman, John M. Shenk, Moses Brenneman (son of Bishop John M.), and D. S. Brunk. When the congregation met to vote for bishop, Brunk being a very young man, received no votes. The other three received votes, but, when the books were being prepared by the bishops, Bishop John M. Brenneman with characteristic firmness and

determination, secretly refused to allow C. B. Brenneman to be considered in the lot because he used tobacco and because he was fond of joking and laughing. Bishop Brenneman was bitterly opposed to levity of any kind, never indulged in a loud laugh, and wrote and spoke against it. Hence when the candidates were announced to the congregation, the name of C. B. Brenneman was omitted to his great surprise and disappointment. He seems never to have learned why he was not a candidate. The bishops announced only two names, John M. Shenk and Moses Brenneman. From these two John M. Shenk was selected and ordained bishop of the Salem and Pike congregation, April 29, 1889. On the next day the congregation met again to ordain P. E. Brunk deacon. On the following Friday twenty-six applicants for admission to membership were instructed. On Saturday, May 4, the congregation met for baptismal services. Twenty-three applicants were baptized and two were received from another denomination. Communion services were held on the next day. Bishop John M. Brenneman, although very feeble, was present at both services. Bishop George Brenneman passed away about a week later.

After his ordination to the bishopric Shenk rose rapidly to a position of power and influence in the state. Naturally the bishop oversight of the mother churches in Fairfield, Perry, and Franklin counties fell to his charge. Soon after his ordination he made a pastoral visit to these churches preaching not only in the Mennonite meetinghouses, but also before Methodist and River Brethren congregations. With the counsel of Bishop John F. Funk and by the direction of the Ohio Mennonite conference Bishop Shenk assumed charge also of the delicate situation arising at West Liberty through the refusal of the Amish Mennonite church at that place to grant a request for English services. The excellent work that he did at that place resulted in the organization of the Bethel Mennonite church. Bishop Shenk has been unjustly blamed for his part in this matter, but the faithful historian must record that Bishop Shenk consented to organize a congregation only after prolonged negotiations with the Amish Mennonite ministers and the final and absolute refusal of the Oak Grove ministers to heed the request of the seceding young people to grant them an English class in Sunday school and one English preaching service a month. It is a well-authenticated fact, too, that Bishop David Plank had said to the Elida ministers: "You brethren take care of those young people and may God bless you!" Subsequent events proved that the course followed by Bishop Shenk was sound in the main. Since

the two Ohio conferences have merged, the Oak Grove and the Bethel congregations are reunited under the oversight of Bishop S. E. Allgyer.

Space forbids a detailed treatment of events subsequent to 1890. Proper attention to proportions would demand more space for the many years of devoted service of Moses Brenneman and others. Moses Brenneman was greatly loved and respected by the members of the congregation as his election to various offices shows. He felt deeply impressed with a call to the ministry, but tradition records that he was in the lot several times before he drew the book that designated him as the Lord's choice. This article should also record the service of Melchiah Brenneman as deacon. He was born at Edom, Virginia, in 1833 and, in 1863, married Elizabeth Shank daughter of David and Rebecca (Funk) Shank of Broadway, Virginia. He was ordained deacon in Mt. Zion Church, Morgan county, Missouri, on Sept. 5, 1875. In 1880 he moved to Allen county and within two weeks after his arrival, went through the lot for the choice of a minister. He drew the eleventh book while the one chosen, Henry H. Good, drew the twelfth. He died in 1882 and lies buried in Salem cemetery. His son, C. D. Brenneman, has rendered valuable service in Ohio Mennonite Sunday school work.

Because of a general awakening to the need of evangelistic work by the Mennonite church in various states and the urgent call for help from this congregation to supply the need, the following ministers were ordained from the Elida congregation between 1880 and 1905: H. H. Good, 1880; Moses Brenneman, 1885; D. S. Brunk, 1888; Andrew Shenk, 1892; George Ross, 1895; Amos Shenk, about 1900; Daniel Shenk, 1900; P. E. Brunk, May 21, 1905; Andrew J. Brenneman, May 21, 1905; S. P. Good (deacon), May 21, 1905; S. C. Brunk (deacon), May 21, 1905.

The following bishops, ministers, and deacons have died while serving the congregation: bishops, Henry Stemen, George Brenneman, and John M. Brenneman; ministers, John Burkholder, Christian Culp, Moses Brenneman, Christian B. Brenneman, and Perry E. Brunk; deacons, Peter Stemen, John Sherrick, Melchi (Melchiah) Brenneman, Christian Lamen, Andrew Stemen, Abram A. Good, Simon P. Good, Samuel C. Brunk, and Jacob B. Huber.

A number of the ministers have moved into other fields: Henry Huber, Indiana; H. H. Good, Tennessee; Andrew Shenk, Missouri; Daniel Shenk, Virginia; D. S. Brunk, Colorado; Andrew J. Brenneman, Texas; Amos Shenk and Enos E. Zuercher, Nampa,

Idaho. Andrew Brenneman returned to Elida several years ago and is now pastor of the Central Mennonite congregation at that place. He is the eldest son of Preacher Moses Brenneman.

The Central congregation was organized in 1925 by a group of former members of the Salem and Pike congregations. During a few years previous to that date a situation had arisen which led a group of the members to appeal to the Ohio Conference for permission to organize a separate congregation. This permission was granted under certain prescribed conditions and the congregation was organized with fifty-three charter members. They purchased a vacant church building in Elida and are enjoying a steady growth under the oversight of the local pastor and of Bishop S. E. Allgyer of the Oak Grove congregation at West Liberty, Ohio. M. L. Troyer, formerly of West Liberty, Ohio, was ordained deacon when the congregation was established.

The present active ministerial body of the Pike and Salem congregation includes: Bishop John M. Shenk; Preachers Gabriel H. Brunk, Otho B. Shenk, David Good, Jacob B. Smith and George Ross; and Deacons Solomon M. Brunk and Perry Smith. The aged bishop, now in his eighty-fifth year, has for several years been asking for the ordination of one of the younger men to assist him in his official duties. The congregation is in a thriving condition with a fine group of children and young people in the Sunday school.

An interesting and informing chapter of the history of early Mennonite communities is the record of its burial grounds and meetinghouses. The Salem and Pike congregation has built five houses for worship. If tradition and the manuscript of 1911 are correct, the first meetinghouse was erected in 1843 in the southwest corner of section thirty-three, across the road from the present Salem church. The pioneer, Christian Stehmann, was buried here in 1844 as was also his daughter-in-law, the wife of Bishop Henry Stemen. It seems likely that the log church was erected and the cemetery laid out on private property and that no formal sale of the site occurred until later. At all events no legal transfer of real estate was made until October 27, 1847. On that date John Enslen and his wife, Catharine, deeded this plot, seven by six rods, for a consideration of five dollars to "Henry Steeman, Peter Steeman, and John Sherrick, elders of the Menonist (sic) Church." The remaining three quarters of this acre were sold for five dollars "to Christian Beery and J. M. Brenneman, elders of the Mennonists (sic) Church of Allen County, Ohio," on October 5, 1863. This

acre plot, thirteen by twelve and one-half rods, used at that time for both church-yard and burial ground, formed the nucleus of the present Salem cemetery. A half-acre plot was added on the east side about 1911. This plot was deeded by Simeon Brenneman to C. D. Brenneman, Joseph Brenneman, and C. C. Culp, trustees of Salem church.

Before 1863, however, a new meetinghouse had been erected on the opposite (south) side of the road on the site of the present Salem church. The first building, as stated above, had been a log cabin about twelve by fourteen feet and was known as the Dutch Hollow church. After Christian Culp, George Brenneman, and J. M. Brenneman, each with a small band of friends and relatives, had settled in Allen county (1852-1855), the log cabin could no longer accommodate the congregation. Accordingly, on January 28, 1857, the heirs of Deacon Peter Stemen sold, for fifteen dollars, one-fourth acre of section five to Henry Sherrick, Henry Stemen, and Christian Beery "Directors of the Menanite (sic) Church." Here a new frame building twenty-eight by thirty-six feet, was erected at a cost of six hundred dollars. If tradition and the manuscript history of 1911 are correct in placing this date at 1856, this church, also, was erected before title was acquired to the land on which the building was located. This church was for many years known as Sherrick's meetinghouse. It adjoined the northwest corner of Henry Sherrick's farm. He was for many years a trustee and he served as janitor without pay for nearly half a century.

In 1874, the membership in Marion township having increased so much that it was no longer satisfactory to hold services in a schoolhouse, the congregation erected a building, also twenty-eight by thirty-six feet in the southeast corner of the southwest quarter of section eleven in Marion township. Although this church was built in 1874 according to tradition and the 1911 record, the congregation did not acquire title to the property until 1888. On September 10 of that year Preacher Henry H. Good and his wife, Susan, executed in favor of the "Trustees of Pike Mennonite Church" a warranty deed transferring for a consideration of fifty dollars one acre of land on which Pike church stood. It was probably not considered necessary for the congregation to own the property until Preacher Good decided to sell his farm in order to move to Tennessee to assume the pastorate of the Amish Mennonite church at Concord, left without a minister by the death of Bishop John Stoltzfus in 1887. Although the official name of the building was the Pike church, it was called Good's and is so designated in the cor-

respondence to the *Herald of Truth* during the eighties. After H. H. Good sold his farm to John M. Shenk in 1888, the church was known for many years as Shenk's meetinghouse.

By 1883 the evangelistic efforts of Preacher C. B. Brenneman had brought so many people into the church that Sherrick's meetinghouse, built more than a quarter of a century earlier (1856-7), could no longer accommodate the growing congregation. In order to build a larger meetinghouse, however, it was necessary to purchase more land. But difficulties arose. The site of the Salem meetinghouse was originally a part of the old Peter Stemen farm, which had passed into the hands of Henry Miller, a grandson of Bishop Henry Stemen. He had been cited for heroism at the battle of Shiloh where he had served as a drummer under the Union flag. Three of his brothers also had served under Northern commanders. He was finally prevailed upon to sell a strip one rod wide and eight rods long at the rear end of the church lot. His lack of sympathy with the church of his fathers was registered, no doubt, in the price he demanded for this one-twentieth of an acre. He received forty dollars. These eight square rods were sold to "Andrew Stemen and Henry Sherrick, Trustees of the Mennonite Church and their successors in office." The deed was executed on June 30, 1883. In this case, at least, the site was acquired before the building was erected! The new church was built in the fall of 1883 at a cost of twenty-one hundred dollars and the first services held in it on Sunday, January 6, 1884. John M. Brenneman, in a letter to John F. Funk, described the new building as a frame structure, forty by sixty feet, with an "audience room" forty by fifty, sixteen feet high.

This church (formerly Sherrick's, now Salem) is at present the sole meeting place of the Salem and Pike congregation. In 1896 the continued growth of the congregation had made it necessary to rebuild the Pike church, also. The building, erected at that time at a cost of three thousand dollars and of approximately the same size and style as the present Salem church, burned to the ground, a total loss, one Sunday morning a few years ago. Steps were taken immediately to rebuild, and lumber purchased and stored in the sheds at Pike church for that purpose. For several reasons, however, construction has been temporarily, if not indefinitely, postponed. Many of the members feel that modern means of transportation and Allen county's excellent system of hard roads have made the use of two places of worship for one congregation not only unnecessary, but actually harmful to its best

interests. Holding services in the two houses on alternate Sundays might discourage regular attendance by members residing at the extremes of the settlement, they fear. And services held in both houses every Sunday might affect the unity of the congregation.

In 1902 it became necessary to purchase additional space for hitching racks and sheds at Salem church. One-half acre, adjoining the church lot on the east and presenting a two hundred foot frontage along the road that runs east and west past the church, was purchased of Henry M. Sherrick, son of the pioneer, Henry Sherrick, for one hundred fifty dollars. The old church lot across the road, with its subsequent additions, serves as a burial ground, the Salem cemetery. Here repose the mortal remains of the hardy pioneers who conquered this wilderness and planted in it a Christian community nearly ninety-one years ago.

How little will those who assemble on this historic spot in August of this year for the 1932 Ohio State Mennonite Sunday School Conference be able to realize the hardship, the grinding physical toil, the prayer, the tears, the consecration, the steadfast devotion to an ideal that have gone into the building of this fine Christian settlement! Have mistakes been made? No doubt. And we, alas, shall probably continue to make them. But let us forget their mistakes, or remember them only to profit by them, and may their virtues ever live greenly in our memories!

A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE MENNONITES IN AMERICA IN 1841: A CONTEMPORARY DOCUMENT BY JACOB KREHBIEL

Translated and Edited by Harold S. Bender

(Concluded)

In the practice of the Lord's Supper, likewise, there is nothing special to notice except that the preachers and bishops stand up and go to the seats where they dispense the elements. Likewise it should be noticed that in most of the places feet-washing has been introduced. Yet I found that in Bucks county and Montgomery county feet-washing is not practiced. In these regions live the most of the Mennonites who live in large settlements. On the other hand feet-washing has been introduced into the other churches of Pennsylvania so far as I know. I discussed this matter also with them; they said that feet-washing had never been practiced among them within their memory and for that reason was not practiced at that time. They had, however, not the least objection to it and would gladly introduce it as soon as it was the general desire of the people. Their opinion in this matter was approximately the following: that it was an Eastern custom in accordance with the clothing of the lower limbs at that time, and that Christ used this as a symbol of his humility and for an example, and that we were at all times obliged to practice the same humility. Why this practice had never been introduced among them they did not know. In other places where feet-washing is practiced, the observance is based upon John 13, and Matt. 28:20, with the remark that we do not have the power to do away on our own authority with what the Savior so expressly required, for his intent in this matter is quite clearly indicated in the words, "and teach them to observe everything which I have commanded you."

Preachers are chosen in the well-known way, by the lot. All those voted for are taken into the lot, even when only one vote is cast for a person. For the choice of a bishop the ministers in a district cast lots among themselves under the leadership of their bishop or several bishops from other congregations. On the lot or the slip which determines the minister to be chosen the follow-

ing words from Prov. 16:33 are always written: "the lot is cast into the lap but it falls as the Lord wills;" the other slips are blank.

In the conduct of divine service, with the exception of a few minor differences here and there the procedure is as follows: at the beginning they sing several verses from a hymn or the whole hymn is sung, and then a chapter is read out of an Epistle (at Easter the passion story of Christ is used), then several verses are sung again from a hymn whereupon the opening address is given. This is short. Then a season of silent prayer is held; after this the real sermon is given and the text is read. Toward the end before the last prayer the preacher stops and gives liberty (in these very words)[6] so that any brother present who wishes to say anything may do so for the benefit of all present. If there is another preacher present, he will then speak a few brief words. In the absence of the same, a deacon may speak, who usually only states that the address of the brother so far as he could understand was according to the gospel and he wishes the blessing of God thereto. After this the officiating preacher rises again and speaks a few brief closing words whereupon he leads in an audible prayer, minister and audience kneeling during the prayer. After this a few verses of a hymn are sung and then the preacher dismisses the congregation with an audible benediction.

When I preached in the Skippack church in Pennsylvania in 1839, at the conclusion of the service, the bishop, Brother Hunsicker, said to me, "You have spoken a few minutes less than an hour." (He sat beside me and at my request had given the opening address.) I asked him how he knew that, since this seemed a bit strange to me. He replied that he looked at his watch. I had not noticed this and asked him further how long they usually spoke, whereupon he replied that they usually spoke about this length. I had never taken notice of this and do not yet take notice since as far as I am concerned one time is just as good as another.

Thus far then I have described briefly the church practices and ceremonies but have not yet dealt much with the first question concerning the inner condition. Your question did not say so in so many words but still I could see that you had another point in mind which cannot be evaded; namely, difficulties, or if one could use an expression that is somewhat sharper, strife (*Streitigkeiten*).

Difficulties existed already in the time of the Apostles and after their time conditions developed in the first Christian churches

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6 This custom is based upon the words of Paul—I Cor. 14:30, 31.

which led to strife concerning which the history of the church testifies and complains. Is there anything else to be expected in our own time? Accordingly from time to time quarrels have arisen among the American Mennonites which, however, are often again settled quietly in the congregation in which they occur. When the evil becomes greater, so that it leads to strife, the first step is that the neighboring preachers come to the preacher in the place where the difficulty exists and try to help to bring about peace again. This is often accomplished with good results. However, if this attempt is unfruitful, the question is brought up at the next conference where after much consideration and counsel a decision is taken to which the quarreling parties are expected to submit. The party who refuses to accept the decision is excluded from the church, and denied all connections with Mennonites, as long as he refuses to submit to the regulations, and until he returns and is taken back into the conference. There is always one party which yields obedience, but this is not always the case with the other party although it really happens very seldom. Now if the disobedient party is a preacher, he dare not preach any longer in the churches, but if he has supporters who gather together among themselves and let him preach they would be recognized by all the Mennonite churches as schismatics, until they should return. In this connection one must not forget that the Mennonites in the United States and Canada stand in common connection and that a decision by one district is recognized everywhere else as valid. It soon becomes known everywhere.

When I was in Pennsylvania in 1839 I took advantage of the opportunity to speak with the preachers about this subject. The occasion for this was just such a state of affairs as described above, among the preachers in the region of Lancaster. I had already heard of this the first half year after I came to the United States. Two preachers by the name of Seitz and Kauffman fell into strife. All the above-named measures were taken with the outcome that Seitz was counted by the conference as the more guilty. Both were required to make a public confession before the church and at the same time to forgive one another with heart and mouth. The first took place, but since each of the two preachers had supporters, certain events soon took place so that the second part of the reconciliation was not carried out as it should have been. And the matter came to such a pass that the two had to come before a second conference. Since through the prolongation of the case it became increasingly more important, preachers and deacons from distant

settlements were invited to the conference which thereby became much larger than the usual conference. But the desired result was never quite obtained. Seitz and several of his members were not fully reconciled. Kauffman preached at once with the consent of the conference. Seitz was not permitted to appear in any of the pulpits of the churches but, since he was a good preacher, preached in churches of other denominations wherever he was invited. This was the state of affairs when I made my above-mentioned visit to Pennsylvania in this region, although ten years had passed since the beginning of the strife. Recently I heard that Seitz had yielded and had again been accepted, although this report has not been confirmed.

The same condition holds with regard to John Lapp here since he did not accept the decision of the conference. It is true that he has built a new church house together with his supporters and that he preaches there every fourteen days. But he has no connection with the congregations which hold together with the church at large.

From all this it is clear, as our own experience would confirm, that everywhere one finds human beings with human weaknesses, and if we examine ourselves impartially we will also find that we are in some respects in the same category. How important then is the statement of the apostle in James 3:2, where it says that we are all fallible and that we should therefore help one another to bear our mutual weaknesses and not push down still farther the one who is sinking but rather seek to help him up again as has always been the true intention of Christ for his apostles as we can see from many examples and teachings which have been left behind for our instruction.

In order to make it easier for myself, I have tried to combine the first two questions, since basically they are closely associated. Although I have attempted to expound these two questions according to my knowledge and insight, I see that I have not only failed to handle them adequately but that I have perhaps touched the second question "practical Christianity" only slightly. It is perhaps true that I lack the gift of doing this properly and that I should refer to my work simply as an attempt. If we lay before ourselves the question "what is practical Christianity," we feel at once quite sure that more is included in this question than is often light-heartedly stated, when we hear the expression, "here or there I have met true practical Christianity," without giving a proof of the statement. It is true that this is not the place to in-

dulge in a dissertation on this subject, and there comes to my mind the passage in I Cor. 3:11, where the true foundation is pointed out to us. And then too it seems a bit venturesome for me to speak definitely and finally in this matter. It would be very easy to shoot to one side or other of the mark and thereby invalidate the whole discussion. I must therefore refer again to the expression which I used on the first page at the beginning of my discussion, and attempt to report things in such a way as they have impressed themselves upon my understanding. Accordingly I cannot say otherwise, but that I have observed in most places among the preachers and the members (of course not without exceptions) a will and endeavor to live according to the meaning of the gospel. My private conversations were often directed along this line, and I never experienced any tediousness in spending several hours in discussing spiritual things and in exchanging views over this or that question and securing counsel from others. At the beginning of every annual conference there is always a new profession of desire to continue to build on the basis of the teaching of the gospel, although often limitations manifest themselves in that gifts are not equally distributed as we are taught by the gospel in the parable of the pounds. It would also be necessary not to omit considering whether and how much faithfulness is found in spite of narrow outlook. But I have also learned to know men of insight and vision such as Benjamin Eby of Waterloo, his brother Peter Eby of Pennsylvania,* Christian Herr of the same place, and many others who are usually looked upon as leaders in dealing with important subjects, and who, as is well known, do not abuse the confidence placed in them. In connection with the names given above there comes once more to my mind the former bishop, Jacob Meyer, now gone to his reward, who served long years as bishop at the church at Twenty Mile Creek. Not only did his own church have occasion to sorrow at his loss but the people of his neighborhood who belonged to other denominations also found in him a faithful counselor. He was the one to whom those came who were suffering or depressed or disturbed in their inner life and who gladly poured out their hearts to him to leave him again comforted or at least strengthened. Without the least self-interest he sought to serve everyone and won the love of all. His very countenance had something unusually attractive about it so that often people who had come in strife with one another and had accepted

* Benjamin Eby, bishop, died 1853; Peter Eby, bishop in Lancaster County, died 1843; Christian Herr, bishop in Lancaster, died 1853.

him as the arbitrator (for his impartiality was recognized by all), were unable to offer the least resistance to his conclusions and left his presence reconciled to one another. I count it as of great value to myself to have known this worthy preacher in his lifetime and to have been able to hold conversations with him.

Since, however, I am not able to treat this subject as I should like to and yet would like to give you something whereby, as much as possible, you may come to your own conclusions, I am inclosing with this letter several newly printed pamphlets which at least will not be useless and which will give you further material for consideration. These pamphlets are:

1. *Eine Beschreibung der Neuen Creatur,* written by Abraham Gottschall, [1838] preacher of the Mennonite church in Doylestown, Pa., who only recently died.
2. *Briefe an die Mennoniten-Gemeinde in Ober-Canada,* [1840] of which however the first letter alone can be used in this connection since the others were written in Europe.
3. *Kurzgefasste Kirchengeschichte und Glaubenslehre der Taufsgesinnten Christen oder Mennoniten,* [1841] written by Benjamin Eby, previously mentioned preacher at Waterloo, Upper Canada.

This last work came into my hands as a gift of the author himself, after I had written this treatise up to this point. I notice that the last named work contains a description, beginning with page 204, of the ritual and customs of the churches in this country.

Now finally we come to the third question concerning the religious instruction of the youth. Here we must first attempt to understand the conditions as they exist here in the United States. The English language is the dominating one because it is the official language of the authorities in all the offices and courts. It is also the language of the schools and, so far as I know, English schools, which are under special inspection, have been established in every community. In Pennsylvania where the Germans originally settled, where they were most numerous and still form an important part of the population, German schools had been established earlier and the German youth had the opportunity of receiving instruction in the old manner as had formerly been the case in the homeland. In other states where the Germans are not so numerous, it was formerly impossible to think of German schools but now because of the extensive immigration from Germany, people are beginning to think of the need in this respect

and here and there, although not generally German schools are springing up. However, it is almost universally the case that youth is first sent to the English school and taught in this language and then later sent to the German school. This was and is yet the case in Pennsylvania and likewise in Canada where strong German settlements are to be found. In the region of Pittsburgh there was established a seminary for the training of German teachers which is supposed to be making good progress. In general it can be said that the German language is making progress in the United States and is much better off now than twenty years ago. The German language is respected and one can find German people almost everywhere.

Since in the English schools of the United States no attention is paid to the religious denominations in regard to teaching and all schools are open to all, it becomes the responsibility of each denomination to provide for further instruction of the youth in its own confession of faith. This is taken care of by the clergy. As far as the Mennonites are concerned in this respect, they can use their catechisms in the German schools and if the parents are not remiss in their duties, they can help a great deal in this matter as is often the case. However, there is often great negligence. It is true that in general the preachers attempt to do their duty, but the aid of the parents is absolutely necessary. Although, as may be seen from what I have just said, religious instruction has not yet reached the highest level, I must add on the other side at once that I am almost constantly in correspondence with ministers and members in Pennsylvania and Canada, and that in many letters, which also are frequently written in quite good style, I can observe nothing else according to my opinion than the sincere desire to follow faithfully after the teaching of Christ and his Apostles according to the pure meaning of the gospel in teaching and life by means of his Grace, and to recommend the same life to others and to encourage them to do likewise.

Among the many ministers and bishops with whom I have come in contact during the ten years that I have been here, I have found only two who believe that the hearing of the sermon was sufficient for the instruction of the young people without spending extra time for this purpose, and these two are John Lapp of this place, and David Habecker at the Falls. We once had here, if I am not mistaken, in 1834 a meeting or conference at which I recommended that it would be good to give candidates for baptism a more fundamental and more lengthy instruction before they

should be received into the church, whereupon both of the above-named brethren expressed themselves that according to their opinion the candidate for baptism received sufficient instruction in the sermon if they were attentive. I remarked in reply that it would hardly be possible to do too much in this matter, but they tried to insist upon their opinion by saying that if the hearing of the sermon in case of these persons was not sufficient very likely private instruction would also not be of any value to them. However, at this point Bishop Jacob Gross of the Twenty or as it is also called, Clinton, spoke up and said, "You should not view private instruction before confirmation (baptism) as something new because it has always been in use with us and also in Pennsylvania and dare not be overlooked." Both John Lapp and Habecker were at that time still members of the church. We were not surprised at the opinion of the former since it was only about seven years earlier that he had come over to us from the Amish. He himself had never been a member of the Amish church but his parents had been and his father had been a preacher among them.

Because of the above-mentioned opinion of John Lapp there was for some time before Lapp's separation from the church considerable difficulty in the matter of providing instruction for the candidates for baptism before their reception into the church. In Pennsylvania on the contrary, as I was told everywhere on my visit, such instruction is the regular custom. During the instruction the thirty-five questions of the Gerhard Roosen book* are used as a basis. The same practice is followed in Canada as you will see from the accompanying book by Preacher Benjamin Eby (*Kurzgefasste Kirchengeschichte*) from page 204 on and following. I had intended to write you at some length about this point but since in Eby's book the topic is treated at some length together with other practices in the church as they are practiced here in America, I consider it rather unnecessary to say much about it. Furthermore, I am of the opinion that from what I have said so far and what you will find in the book you can secure a fairly comprehensive statement of affairs, and that a more complete discussion would require a much more lengthy report.

This short treatise has now been written for you just as I felt I had to give it according to my conscientious opinion and according to what I have observed. However, I do not doubt that

* *Christliches Gemuethegespraech.* See note earlier in the letter.

another report by someone else would read somewhat differently in certain respects; but this would not hinder me from describing to you the conditions as I have done according to my inner conviction. Is it not after all common knowledge that one and the same subject may be treated by different people, may be looked at differently and judged accordingly? That would probably be true in this case.

However, in order to be impartial, I want to submit for your consideration something from another side. It is a written exposition of the affairs concerning Johannes Risser of Friedelsheim, now living in Richland county, Ohio. He could never find it possible to join with the American Mennonites living there and since I frequently reported to him by letter the decisions of the Canadian conferences (which he always appreciated very much, and which he called "truly evangelical"), he sent me the following material. This he did partly with the desire that it should be laid before our conference; but, since this matter would have created considerable trouble, and, since on account of a number of opinions known by me to be entertained by him, there was little likelihood of anything satisfactory coming out of it, I have not yet done this. Following is an accurate copy of Johannes Risser's own writing.

> The Historical Facts and Causes Which Led to a Division Between the Mennonites here and Johannes Risser, written by Johannes Risser himself, Richland county, Ohio, in the month of March, 1837.

"I and P. Beutler came here as preachers where we at once joined the church and took part in the proclamation of the gospel. It was also my desire and endeavor to buy land near to the church so I would be better able to take part in the meetings. However, it developed that I had to buy at some distance from the meetinghouses, namely, six or seven miles from the one, and seven to eight miles from the other, and that likewise in my neighborhood there were no other Mennonites living except Beutler and Roth. About a half year after we had settled here preacher Nold came to conduct communion service. On Saturday the congregation was called together when he preached and on Sunday following the communion was held."

[Editor's note.—The rest of Risser's letter deals with the difficulties which arose between Risser and the congregation as a result of which Risser was not permitted to take communion and

could not become a full-fledged member of the church. The difficulties concern matters of faith and practice, such as the attitude toward holding public office and other similar points. Because the letter contains so much purely personal material, it was thought to be unsuited for publication. It might be worth while to point out, however, that from the letter it is clear that Bishop Nold from Columbiana county, Ohio, was in charge of the congregation in Ashland county which had no bishop of its own. The writer names several other preachers and deacons, for instance, Nusbaum and Kauffman, both young men, and a certain Killmer. Beutler was fully reconciled to the church and was acknowledged as a member and preacher. A second letter from Johannes Risser dated Sept. 14, 1837 at Hayes' crossroads post office, Richland county, Ohio, is also given in full by Krehbiel, the letter begins as follows:]

"Dear friend and brother: I was very glad to hear through your letter of a decision of the conference which is so thoroughly consistent to the life and spirit of the gospel. I would have hardly expected it. The conferences of the Mennonites here have had little attraction for me. But the news of your conferences I have read each time with joy and satisfaction." [The remainder of the letter is not worth while printing. The reference to the Ohio conferences is interesting as confirming the early date of the existence of these conferences. Throughout both letters Risser complains about the narrowness and harshness of the ministers dealing with him. He calls Killmer a bishop (Volle Diener). Krehbiel comments on this criticism as follows:]

"I do not know Killmer personally but what I have heard of him is not particularly to his credit. If Risser had come in contact with the Canadian preachers, he certainly would have had nothing to complain of narrowness and harshness even though he would not have come to an agreement with them. Killmer has since sold out and moved away." [Krehbiel then concludes his letter as follows:]

So much for the letter of Johannes Risser, but what should one say to it? What sure conclusion can one draw from it? Very likely there were mistakes made on both sides, as is usually the case in such circumstances. I have not yet been in Ohio and have met only a few preachers from there but I intend to go there next year if nothing hinders me.

David Roth, who was living several years ago in Richland county, in Risser's neighborhood as is well known, told me during his stop in Buffalo about the matters which Risser described. He

said that Risser was not without blame. Be that as it may I can speak only of things which I have experienced myself. I have spoken slightly with the Canadian preachers who have heard something about the circumstances in Ohio. Their opinion was that each preacher was bound to present his sermon to his hearers exactly according to the gospel or according to the teaching of Christ and his Apostles which it contains, but that it was not allowable to require of him how he must believe and teach since the teachings of the gospel are for this purpose. Only after he transgressed against these teachings was he subject to church discipline. It is true that shortly after my arrival in this country when I attended the conference which took place soon after I came to Canada, I was asked about feet-washing and going to law; but this was all. After consideration of the evangelical teachings on both points I could have no objection to the same, but of "requirements" nothing was said, and so it has remained to the present. We live and teach in peace with one another, with the exception of John Lapp and his followers whose opinions I could never endorse in every respect. But the same is true of the churches in Waterloo, Clinton, and Pennsylvania, otherwise he would not at present be excommunicated and separated from the church. To give only one example of many, I will tell you of the following illustration. At one time John Lapp tried to insist in a discussion with me that the Old Testament was not necessary for salvation since we have enough in the New, and a preacher should not therefore take a text from the Old Testament. I replied to him by pointing to the work of creation, the fall of man, etc., then to the clear and glorious promises of the coming Messiah as redeemer which was made known to us primarily through the Old Testament, and are fulfilled in the New. For this reason the Old and New Testaments are closely associated, and we could not do without either one since the one is illuminated through the other. Then I pointed out the testimony of the Lord himself in many different places, among others, John 5:39, likewise the testimony of Paul who points out the value of the Scriptures in II Tim. 3:16, where he surely is speaking only of the Old Testament since the New Testament had not yet at that time been written. I asked him how a human being with his limitations could declare that to be unnecessary which God himself hath sanctioned. For that reason Old Testament texts are to be used. All this I pointed out to him but he insisted upon his opinion. Endorsement on his stand on this point he is not likely to find here.

I must confess that I have often wondered how it was possible for Johannes Risser to come into such an embarrassing position since I have never experienced any thing but love and sympathy and brotherly reception among the Mennonites near and far with whom I have come in contact, with the single exception of John Lapp, but who likewise, as mentioned above, is unable to get along with practically no one. I have received freely from time to time invitations to come to Pennsylvania.

I have now given you in a brief way my views in regard to the points which you mentioned in your letter of March 31, 1840. I am quite conscious of the fact, however, that what I have given you is only a very unsatisfactory and imperfect attempt. I have, however, a feeling of satisfaction that I have been able throughout to hold strictly to my inner convictions. If you will now compare what I have written to you with the above mentioned letter of J. S. Risser and also with the contradictory reports which you receive from America, if you will compare these all in the light of the gospel and the love of Jesus Christ, you can scarcely help arriving at a result which will be of value to you.

Yours in Christian Love,
Jacob Krehbiel.

NOTE: MENNO SIMONS ON THE INCARNATION

A Correction

I. E. Burkhart

In my articles on the subject, "Menno Simons on the Incarnation"[1] the impression was given that Menno held to the opinion that the flesh of man was evil in itself, that is, inherently evil. Further study of a number of points in Menno's teaching has led to a change of opinion on the point pertaining to Menno's view of the nature of the flesh of man. It is the object of the following paragraphs to correct this impression as to Menno's view on the subject, and to give my personal opinion in the matter.[2]

That Menno Simons did not teach that the flesh of man is inherently evil is evident from the following considerations: (1) his opponents in debate did not maintain this point against him; (2) reformers such as Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin did not hold that the flesh is evil **per se,** and Menno was never charged with a view different from theirs; (3) Menno's own writing can best be interpreted to mean that "the flesh" is the evil nature which was Adam's after the fall, rather than the material body.

The earlier conclusion was based on an erroneous conception of Menno's use of the term "flesh." There are good reasons for believing that Menno used the term flesh somewhat freely. However, it seems clear that the best interpretation of Menno's use of this term is that by "the flesh" he meant the fallen human nature and not the substance of the body **per se.** In this connection it might be useful to cite the same passages as were quoted in the earlier articles.[3]

If one maintains that Menno did not hold to the flesh as inherently evil, it will at once become apparent that there was no connection between Menno and Valentinus and other Gnostics of early Christian centuries who held that all matter is evil. This view was refuted in the articles[4] with the exception that "a distant likeness" was admitted in that "the Gnostics saw only evil in all matter and Menno saw only evil in the flesh of man."[5] Even this remote similarity must be repu-

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[1] *Mennonite Quarterly Review,* April and July, 1930.

[2] The articles as printed in the *Review* were first written as a part of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts in the history department of the University of Pittsburgh.

[3] *M. Q. R.,* April, 1930, pp. 126, 127, 128. See footnotes 72, 73, 79, 80, and 81 for references in Dutch and English works.

[4] *M. Q. R.,* July, 1930, pp. 178ff.

[5] *M. Q. R.,* July, 1930, pp. 179, 196.

diated when one grants that Menno did not teach that the flesh of man is inherently evil.

The author regrets that the former inadequate interpretation was not corrected before going to print. This change of viewpoint on the matter pertaining to the flesh, does not in the least affect, but rather strengthens, the writer's former opinion that Menno did have a comprehensive evangelical view of the person and work of Christ, and that he deserves to be classed in the front ranks of reformation heroes. It may be well in closing to quote the former conclusion as to the historical significance of Menno's view of the Incarnation, and his place in history as a reformer:

"It seems clear that Menno Simons' view of the person of Christ signifies historically an intention to say that Jesus Christ was the Son of God in a unique sense, that He had been begotten of the Father 'from the beginning,' that He came into this world voluntarily in order to carry out the purposes and designs of the Father, that He limited Himself in order to take this step, though the truly divine nature was also present, that He came as a man and lived as humans do, except that He remained sinless by an indefatigable cultivation of His God-consciousness and an implicit obedience to all that pertained to the will of His Father, that He died an ignominious death by crucifixion, was buried, arose from the dead, and returned again to heaven to the same position which He held before His limitation."[6]

Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli seem more highly endowed than Menno, but Menno towers head and shoulders above all of them in the finer virtues such as respect for personality, kindliness, tempered speech, patience with enemies, and humility. When dealing with persons he always addressed them in a respectful manner. The epithetical and the harsh expressions so abundantly evident in the writings of the others are entirely wanting in those of Simons.

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[6] M. Q. R., July, 1930, p. 196.

BOOKS

The Teachings of Jesus, A textbook for College and Individual Use, by Harvie Branscomb, Ph. D., Professor of New Testament in Duke University. Cokesbury Press, Nashville, Tennessee. 1931, pp. 384. Index.

This book is a worthy effort to write the life and teachings of Jesus from a historical viewpoint. Jesus is accepted as "a historical person." The testimony of The Annals of Tacitus, The Antiquities of Josephus, and The Talmud are said to be "three solid mountain peaks of fact which assure us that the Story of Jesus is not a beautiful mirage created by pious imagination." With the Jesus of history in the background the author proceeds to set forth his teachings in a vital and untrammeled manner. The aim, though not expressly stated, seems to be that of setting forth the leading ideas and principles of Jesus from a vital rather than a doctrinal standpoint, if such is possible. Jesus is lauded as a capable teacher though not as one who took up the profession of teaching as popularly practised in his day. "He is not to be understood as a teacher expounding a thesis, but as the prophet of the kingdom and the shepherd of the lost sheep, of God's Israel" (97). It is his highest aim "to bring to the harlots, publicans, and others a knowledge of what the establishment of God's kingdom would mean, and to bring them into its ranks." (95). The discussion of the life of these kingdom subjects calls forth many fine statements. In fact, it seems to the reviewer that the strongest point in the entire discussion is the author's emphasis on the inner nature of kingdom subjects. "Goodness is not simply a combination of virtues. It is rather a new spirit dominating the whole of one's life." (175). "Lust and anger and resentment are wrong because a very different spirit should dwell in the inner life." (180). "If the essence of goodness be the activity of love the moral criterion or guide ceases to be an external standard and becomes an inner light." (181). In the foregoing and many similar expressions does the author endeavor to uncover the innerness of Jesus' teaching.

The teachings of Jesus on marriage are said to mean "that marriage was a union and not a contract, that it was permanent and not subject to the inclination of the moment, that it was the blending of two lives, not a temporary association. . . . Men and women must think and act and plan on the assumption that marriage is essentially a union of lives for life." (240, 241). Concerning divorce it is said that "the marriage bond is so sacred and intimate that it holds even though they (the contracting parties) be separated from each other." But "we must remember that these sayings on divorce are based on the assumption that one is attempting to live the life of the kingdom" (241), and that "if the family unhappiness be one's own fault, the obvious course will be to proceed at once to remove the evil . . . ." Cases where separation is necessary "are personal and social disasters. They should be the very last resort, and be entered only with sadness and a sense of shameful failure." (242, 243). Nor does the author speak less ably concerning prayer. He understands

Jesus to say that "men do not pray because they do not believe that anything will be accomplished by it . . . and that it varies in its intensity with the definiteness with which one believes in God." (296, 281).

Many other points could be discussed to show a fine insight on the part of the author, but let us turn to some objections which must be made to the book and these on serious grounds.

One could wonder why a book should be written on the teachings of Jesus and little or nothing be said as to His deity. Did not Jesus say, "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30), and the Roman centurion, "Truly this was the Son of God" (Matt. 27:54)? Why omit the virgin birth when the records plainly tell us that the angel came to Mary and declared she was "highly favored," and that "the Holy Spirit should overshadow her" and that the fruit of this union "should be called holy, the Son of God" (Luke 1:30-36)? Why say nothing of the incarnation of deity when the apostle takes great care to say that "the Word was made flesh" (John 1:14)? In fact, it is all the more tragic to note that the author uses this same reference from John to point out that the apostle "reworked the essential beliefs (of Christianity) in terms of contemporary philosophic thought." (78). As if it were more important for readers to know that John and the philosopher Philo both used the word "Logos" than for them to be impressed with the fact that "the Word (Logos) was God." And why should nothing be said of redemption when Jesus himself said, "I came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give my life a ransom (the price paid to free a slave) for many" (Matt. 20:28). "For this cause (to die) came I unto this hour" (John 12:27)? One should not assign motives for such a barren silence on such vital points, but it does seem difficult to understand. Dr. Branscomb may also believe in revealed religion with other Christian people, but he is too timid to say so. He would rather say that the Jewish religion came through the slime of pagan polytheism and developed into monotheism by an evolutionary process (114) and that Persian dualism gave the Jewish people the idea of a struggle between good and evil in this world (121), rather than teach that Jesus held to the idea that He was the revealer of God to men as may be taken from Jesus' words: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9).

The author cannot be said to favor the practise of war, though he does say, "force may sometimes be right" (187). But why grant a concession on war when Jesus said "love your enemies?" The way to do away with immorality and drunkenness is for those who do not believe in it to refrain entirely from its practise. So with war, let those who follow Jesus in love to enemies and service to man refrain from butchery. So also must we object to the author's theory that some of the teachings of Jesus can have no application to-day. It cannot be true in principle. Says he, "What value can Jesus' command to wash one another's feet have to-day?" (371). We would answer that it has the same value to-day as it had when given. The command was given and exemplified in the midst of selfish quarreling and place seeking. As if we had no need of this lesson on humility now! We are still asking to sit on the right hand and on the left in the kingdom as did the disciples. Men are still

lying, stealing, and slandering, trampling others down that they may rise. Then why not follow and obey Jesus to-day as of old?

Space will not permit to discuss authorship and dates of the Gospels. Suffice it to say that the author has many opponents to his statement that "only one evangelist was an eyewitness" of the life and work of Jesus. (27). Nor do the late dates agree with many conservative scholars such as Ramsay, Robertson, Kerr, and others. The book, as to its method, would be well adapted to class use, but it is all too human, too subjective, too undoctrinal. It has some value for the discriminating student but would not be a good investment for the novice.

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